

# WellBeing

Australia's leading natural health & living magazine

## treat yourself

Beauty rituals  
Inspired homes  
Follow your calling  
No-grain recipes  
Embrace success

*Is a tiny home for you?*

**FARMING AT A CROSSROADS:  
CAN WE GROW A HEALTHY FUTURE?**

**JYOTISH  
ASTROLOGY**

**YOGA**  
**FOR DIFFICULT TIMES**

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
**SAY GOODBYE TO UTI**

**Your children & peer pressure**  
**Saturn's cycle of transformation**  
**Meet inspirational author Bronnie Ware**

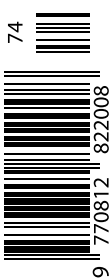
**KAKADU DREAMING | RECONNECT IN THE COOK ISLANDS | RAISE ADVENTUROUS KIDS**

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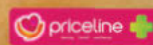
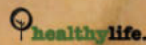
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# WellBeing

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Terry Robson Ph +61 2 9887 0320

## EDITOR

Danielle Kirk Ph +61 2 9887 0640

**MANAGING EDITOR** Kerry Boyne

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT** Kate Duncan

**DESIGNER** Rachel Henderson

**PREPRESS** Ivan Fitz-Gerald

**NATIONAL ADVERTISING MANAGER**

Kirsti Couper Ph +61 2 9887 0369

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SALES**

**& MARKETING**

Sandy Shaw Ph +61 8 8342 5989

**VICTORIAN BUSINESS**

**DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

Tracey Dwyer Ph +61 3 9694 0440

**ADVERTISING PRODUCTION**

**CO-ORDINATOR**

Kate Martin Ph +61 2 9887 0370

**ADVERTISING SENIOR DESIGNER**

Martha Rubazewicz

**MARKETING CAMPAIGN EXECUTIVE**

Kye Blackett Ph +61 2 9887 0326

**PUBLISHER** Janice Williams



**CHAIRMAN/CEO** Prema Perera

**PUBLISHER** Janice Williams

**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

Vicky Mahadeva

**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER** Emma Perera

**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER** Karen Day

**CIRCULATION DIRECTOR** Mark Darton

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR** Kate Podger

**EDITORIAL PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Anastasia Casey

**PRINT PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Lillian Ohanessian

**PREPRESS MANAGER** Ivan Fitz-Gerald

**MARKETING & ACQUISITIONS MANAGER**

Chelsea Peters

**SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES**

1300 303 414

**CIRCULATION ENQUIRIES**

to our Sydney head office: +61 2 9805 0399

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media that engages

## FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I recently discovered a really obvious thing that I had never known before which leads me to ask, "What don't you know?"

That question is the inverse of what we spend most of our lives declaring: we spend an enormous amount of time announcing what we know. We delude ourselves that there are only small areas of uncertainty in our lives but that is a lie; a well-meaning one, but a lie nonetheless. In reality we swim in a sea of uncertainty but we cling to floating bits of certainty and kid ourselves that they are all there is. Yet we really know so little and I was reminded of that when I recently discovered this thing that most of you reading will probably laugh at and wonder how I have lived beyond the age of 25 without discovering.

My discovery was that the fuel gauge in your car has an arrow on it indicating on which side of your car the fuel cap resides.

OK, have your chortle at my lack of worldliness, but as you do, pause to consider my years of angst every time I am putting petrol into an unfamiliar car and have had to guess which side of the fuel pump to pull up on. It's not a big thing but it did make me wonder how I had missed that piece of information all these years and, even more significantly, what other really useful things don't I know?

In a way this feeds into an incident that happened to my mum recently. She was waiting at a bus stop when a woman driving by stopped and said, "I'm going into the shops. Would you like a lift?" Mum accepted and, although they had never met before, by the time they had arrived at



**Be willing to live in the gap and what you surrender in certainty will be made up for in splendour.**

their destination they had discovered they had mutual links to a small coastal village and Mum has a standing invitation to drop in for a cup of tea. In both being willing to step into the unknown and embrace uncertainty, Mum and this caring lady opened the doors to possibilities that had not existed moments before.

It truly is through the gaps in our knowledge and our certainty that wonder filters in and magic can happen. Be open to what you don't know and who you don't know for that is where the future lies. Be willing to live in the gap and what you surrender in certainty will be made up for in splendour.

**Terry Robson, Editor-in-Chief**

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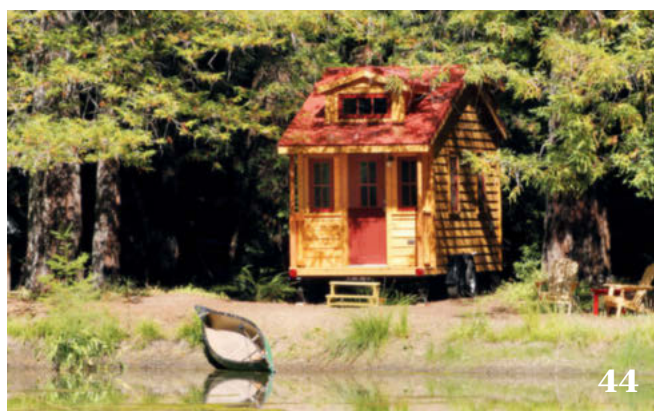
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TRAVEL





## Your say

Did something resonate with you in this issue of *WellBeing*? We'd love to hear your feedback. Write to us at *WellBeing*, Locked Bag 154, North Ryde, NSW 1670, email [wbletters@universalmagazines.com.au](mailto:wbletters@universalmagazines.com.au), comment on our Facebook page or tweet us: @WellBeing\_Mag. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.



## FROM THE EDITOR



Seasons are straightforward in far north Queensland, where I grew up: hot and dry, hot and wet. In "winter" we'd wear light jumpers and complain we were cold ... but, really, it was just a welcome pause amid all that heat. Elsewhere, the four seasons are more nuanced, and those of you who live there will by now be starting to get the winter woollies out, crave warmer food and see leaves falling.

A change in seasons is a time to stop, take stock and reconnect. The transition into winter, in particular, offers a chance to go inside — figuratively and literally — and nourish yourself and your loved ones, in

whatever way works for you. In my family, food has always been the focus. On our cattle property, I remember Mum cooking hearty stews and nourishing soups to keep our tummies warm (she thought it was cold, too).

Now, when I crack out the slow-cooker and chop up seasonal root veg, I reconnect to that time and that place. When Sydney gets chilly, I yearn for the heat of the north and the straightforward warmth of the farming community. Although, for farmers, the seasons can make or break: people on the land can only trust that the weather will be kind, bringing the right amount of rain at just the right time. Sustainable land and livestock management can lay strong foundations but the sky can bring livelihoods tumbling down. Fortunately, rural communities often support each other through tough times.

When we band together, we humans can be wonderful. Together, however, we're also causing our planet and our seasons to change. In response to these changes, many people who live close to the land are choosing to adopt or continue practices that will nourish the land, their livelihoods and their families into the future. Aware urbanites are also changing how they live to better support the Earth that supports everything we do. Individual change seems so small but, combined, it is powerful.

So this winter why not choose to establish habits that nurture you, as well as your world? For the past two years, as a kind of pre-winter prep, I've been doing Mindfulness in May, a challenge where you meditate daily for a month. Meditation offers numerous benefits for body, mind and spirit (even if you skip a few days here and there!). Plus, funds raised go to Charity Water to help build wells in less-developed countries.

Thus can seasonal change lead to individual change and, eventually, societal change. What changes will you make?

*Danielle*

Danielle Kirk, Editor

## STAR LETTER

My three granddaughters, all in their early 20s, were caught up in a culture of fast food and snacks. They greeted my repeated suggestions on healthy living with a kindly "Yes, Nan", but nothing changed in their behaviour.

*WellBeing* has been my guide to healthy living for years, so now, in my late 70s, I'm active, happy and looking my best, due to its holistic approach to all aspects of life.

Getting nowhere with my granddaughters, I decided on a different tack. I started leaving back copies of *WellBeing* around the house and, yes, my granddaughters started to flick through the magazines.

Now, they even bring articles to my attention and the three of them are totally committed to shaping their bodies, health and lifestyles to become the best they can be.

Thank you, *WellBeing*. You have set them on a great life path and made their grandmother forever grateful.

Kathy Smithies

## FULL OF LOVING INFO

Just received the latest issue (#154) in the mail much to my delight and opened the cover to read *From the Editor* with Terry talking about his six-year-old daughter's quest for knowledge then letting go and moving on. What a profound moment it has been for me reading this and it has set me up for the rest of the day.

I'm yet to read the rest of this wonderful magazine as it usually takes me a couple of weeks, but I'm sure as always it will be full of loving information to inspire me from one day to the next. Thank you for having such a wonderful magazine; it has changed my life for the better and I look forward to many more editions arriving in my mail.

Renee McCahon

## A HAPPY FIND

I stumbled across *WellBeing* while on a sort of self-imposed exile and was attracted to the beautiful cover of issue 152, which seemed to offer a bunch of stories written just for me, at this point in my life. After reading it cover to cover, I subscribed and have found the subsequent issues to be just as relevant, filled with interesting people, ideas, research and resources to follow up on.

Thanks to your articles I have enriched my yoga practice, cleaned up my lifestyle and delved further into Ayurveda, which also led me to find one the best yoga





## HEAVENLY TUNES

Fancy some music to help you find light, joy, love and peace? Download a free track from soprano Tania de Jong's newly released classical spiritual album *Heaven on Earth* at [taniadejong.com/wellbeing](http://taniadejong.com/wellbeing).



teachers I've met (she seems to design classes just for me, at this point in my life!). I'm also grateful to have found the work of the amazingly human Gabrielle Bernstein. I also love your yoga articles and the yummy recipes.

**Isabel Trumpf**

## JUST 'WOW'

I wanted to say a big "WOW" — your magazine is just so fantastic.

My partner bought me my first copy about 18 months ago and I have bought every issue since (he actually has issues dating back 20 years ago which are full of fantastic reading and still so appropriate to today). Your magazine is so inspiring and informative.

**Lyn Van Boven**

## PLANETARY PREPARATION

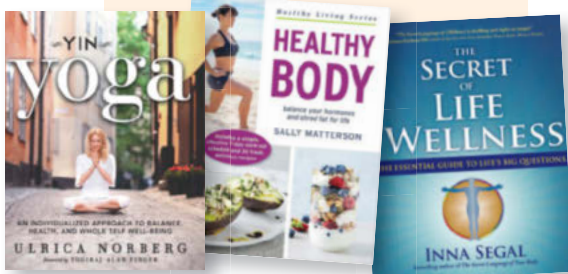
I'm just reading *WellBeing Astrology* for 2015. What a great way to prepare for the year.

**Shaun Matthews**



## WIN

The writer of this issue's star letter wins a pack of inspirational reading material from Rockpool Publishing ([rockpoolpublishing.com.au](http://rockpoolpublishing.com.au)) worth AU\$162.94. The books included are *Dreams* and *Dream Journal* by Rose Inserra, *Natural Remedies* by Mim Beim, *Yin Yoga* by Ulrica Norberg, *Healthy Body* by Sally Matterson and *The Secret of Life Wellness* by Inna Segal.



# Twisdom

We'd love to hear your tips for living well. Email us at [wbletters@universalmagazines.com.au](mailto:wbletters@universalmagazines.com.au), comment on our Facebook page or tweet us @WellBeing\_Mag. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

## WE ASKED: IT'S TIME TO DO WHAT MAKES YOUR SOUL FEEL HAPPY. WHAT CREATES YOUR INNER SMILE?

- My dogs, yoga and laughing ... A LOT.  
**@punky\_moz**
- Hiking. It never fails to make me feel really alive :)  
**@mchetner**
- A clean house, clients getting great results, giving thoughtful gifts.  
**@ceriks\_**

- Yoga, always.  
**Wendy Bridge**
- Massage, meditation and yoga.  
**Sherie Heyer**
- Yoga class. Or a walk on the beach. Catching up with friends. Connecting with my teenage children.  
**Frances McKenna**

## CONVERSATION POINTS

- With all the commercials telling us we aren't good enough it's natural to think we need FIXING! Don't fall into that trap. #self #acceptance  
**@YourHappinesWay**
- Affection, a sense of community and a sense of concern for others are not some kind of luxury. They're about the survival of humanity.  
**@DalaiLama**
- Being strong doesn't always mean fighting things alone. There is equal strength in recognising something is bigger than you and seeking help.  
**@Mental\_Health1**
- There's a big difference between empty fatigue and gratifying exhaustion. Life is too short. Invest in the activities you deeply care about.  
**@marcandangel**
- I have so much to do today but all I want to do is be lazy! I'll blame the weather!  
**@CarrieMoss**
- Tip for #reducingstress — remember two words: #JustBreathe. Take a few deep breaths from the diaphragm and release slowly.  
**@NaturopathMC**
- A chilly afternoon equals a cat on my lap, blanket on my knees and a good book!  
**@KyKyAnderson85**
- Getting up an hour early on my day off to do Pilates before my toddler wakes up. I feel like I should be awarded some kind of certificate.  
**@hippiesglitter**
- Completed a whole set of Ba Duan Jin,

- all on my own! #healing #health  
**@jeanokiwi**
- Today's smoothie is so thick it is more of a mousse. Got a bit overexcited and added too many ingredients!  
**@stacey\_counsell**
- Pretend like no one is watching and just go for it!  
**@sarah\_mugford**
- #designateddriver Boring tonight ... smug tomorrow!  
**@LJE33**
- #Parents: put on your own oxygen mask first, so you can spaciously guide your #child in the hard work of growing up. #psychology  
**@kindlethesoul**
- We all need to empower each other in our career, life and friendships.  
**@ChristyCalbos**
- I have Hilltop Hoods' *Cosby Sweater* in my head. It is making me swagger. Which is a little odd in my sparkly sandals and sari skirt.  
**@NearAsDammit**
- In #business, we have lost sight of the fact that not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.  
**@JeremyScrivens**
- Just finished writing in my gratitude journal (part of my morning ritual). Gosh, it makes me feel good ...  
**@Ali\_Buttiglieri**
- Every day inspires me. This week Elizabeth Gilbert, a night out dancing and our 15-year anniversary made my list.  
**@sarafoley76**





## Recent medical findings for a healthier body



### YOGA YOUR HEART

Physical yoga consists of physical exercises and breath control and is often thought of as a static or slow-moving type of stretching and relaxation. However, it can also include strenuous exercises that tone muscles, tension nerves and stimulate the cardiovascular system. Yoga also includes discipline and meditative practices and can help to expand the mind, explore the emotions and develop the relationship between yourself and the rest of the world. A new study involved a systematic review of 37 separate trials involving 2768 people. The aim was to assess whether the research shows that yoga has an impact on cardiovascular disease. The analysis showed that yoga yields a significant improvement in cardiovascular risk factors compared to being sedentary and that the effects are equivalent to exercise like walking and bike riding. The evidence was that yoga reduced body mass index, lowered blood pressure, reduced bad cholesterol and increased good cholesterol.

Source: *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*

### AVOCADOS & CHOLESTEROL

In this study, healthy participants aged 21–70 who were either overweight or obese were divided into three groups. One group went on a low-fat diet without avocado, a second group went on a moderate-fat diet without avocado and a third group went on a moderate-fat diet with avocado. In both of the moderate fat groups 17 per cent of fats were mono-unsaturated fats although, of course, only the avocado group had them from avocado. After five weeks, the moderate-fat diet without avocado lowered bad LDL cholesterol by 0.2 mmol/litre, the low-fat diet without cholesterol lowered it by 0.22 mmol/litre and the moderate-fat diet with avocado lowered LDL by 0.35 mmol/litre. It was noted by the researchers that the research was supported by the Haas Avocado Board, but it still suggests there is something about the whole avocado that has beneficial effects on cholesterol.

Source: *Journal of the American Heart Association*



### BLUEBERRIES CUT FAT EFFECTS

In this study, mice were fed a high-fat diet for three months, but some of the mice had a diet comprising between 5 and 10 per cent blueberry. After the three months the high-fat diet caused the mice to experience weight gain, adverse changes in glucose and fat metabolism, increased inflammation and increased blood pressure. However, the mice given blueberries had less inflammation and lower blood pressure, suggesting blueberries can indeed reduce these effects arising from a high-fat diet. None of this is to suggest that having a punnet of blueberries at your side when you pull into a fast-food drive-thru should do anything to save your conscience. What it does show is that eating a majority of good foods counteracts a few little indulgences.

Source: *PLOS ONE*

### MEDIFACT

#### YOUR BRAIN BALANCE

Research has shown that not being able to balance on one leg for more than 20 seconds is associated with subclinical infarctions (undetected obstructions in blood supply leading to brain tissue death). This means the capacity to balance on one leg, or not, could be an early and easy indicator of brain damage and impaired function in otherwise healthy people.

Source: *Stroke*

### SALTY HEADACHES

This study involved two groups of people. One group was assigned to eat a Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet (rich in fruits, veggies and low-fat dairy products with reduced saturated and total fat). The other group ate a typical Western diet. Then, for three 30-day periods, each participant ate food with high sodium during one period, intermediate sodium during another period, and low sodium during another period. At the end of each period, the participants completed questionnaires on occurrence and severity of headache. It emerged that people who ate foods high in sodium (around 8g of salt per day) had 33 per cent more headaches than those who ate low-sodium foods (consuming around 4g of salt per day). This was true regardless of whether they were on the DASH diet or not, suggesting salt somehow is involved in headache causation independent of blood pressure. Source: *BMJ Open*





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the whole body health co.





## Interesting slices of life



### SLEEP POSITIVE

People who experience excessive negative thoughts tend to worry too much about the past or future and to experience unwanted intrusive thoughts. These people are likely to experience a generalised anxiety disorder or a depressive disorder and they often have sleep problems. In a new study, researchers had subjects complete questionnaires that measured how much they worried, ruminated or obsessed about something (negative thinking). Subjects identified whether they were “morning or evening types”, whether they had regular sleep hours or whether they tended to have a later sleep-wake schedule. It emerged that people who slept for shorter periods and who went to bed later experienced more repetitive negative thoughts. It might just be that more hours curled up with your teddy bear could be an easy and early intervention for anxiety, depression and negative thinking.

Source: *Cognitive Therapy*

### HUG FOR HEALTH

Researchers asked more than 400 people to complete a questionnaire that determined their levels of social support. Additionally, the subjects took part in 14 consecutive evening telephone conversations with the researchers where they discussed conflicts they had experienced and hugs they had received. Then the subjects were exposed to a virus that causes the common cold and placed in quarantine while the researchers assessed any change in their symptoms. Those people who received

more social support were less likely to develop a cold after being exposed to the virus and they established that hugs were responsible for about 33 per cent of this effect. On top this, people who did become infected had less severe symptoms if they reported getting lots of hugs. Don't shy away from Aunt Alice's embrace just because of her garlic breath and uncomfortably prickly dress — that hug could be the one that keeps you infection-free.

Source: *Psychological Science*

### DID YOU KNOW?

#### TOUCHING NEWS

There are more than 3000 receptors for touch in each fingertip. The universal intelligence that shapes your body doesn't devote such hefty resources for no reason. Touch stimulates a chemical cascade in your body that can shape your mood and your physiology.



### LOVING YOUR SELFIE

For a new study, men aged between 18 and 40 completed surveys regarding their posting behaviour on social media and how much they edited their photos before posting. The men also completed questionnaires that assessed them for certain personality traits. It emerged that men who took and posted more selfies scored higher on narcissism and psychopathy. All men studied fell within the “normal” range and were not actually narcissists or psychopaths, but selfie takers definitely tend higher in these areas. Narcissism is a belief that you are more intelligent, more attractive and better than others. Psychopathy involves a lack of empathy and regard for others. It's not all light-hearted, of course, as self-objectification is linked to depression and eating disorders. Still, gentlemen, you might have to rethink your attitude to that Christmas gift; maybe whoever gave you the selfie stick really was “sticking it to you” as a narcissistic psychopath?

Source: *Personality and Individual Differences*



### BUGS & KISSES

Intimate kissing involving tongue wrestling and saliva-swapping is a uniquely human thing and it appears that around 90 per cent of human cultures do it. To study what happens when we kiss passionately (tongue-kiss, French-kiss or whatever you want to call it), researchers had couples fill out kiss-frequency questionnaires. They then took swabs from the people's mouths to measure bacteria levels. You have more than 100 trillion micro-organisms in your body and there are millions in your mouth, including more than 700 species of bacteria. The researchers then had the couples engage in a passionate kiss after consuming a drink containing specific varieties of lactobacillus and bifidobacteria. The researchers were able to estimate that in a 10-second kiss you transfer around 80 million bacteria into your kissing partner's mouth. Maybe instead of sending “hugs and kisses” we should really be sending “bugs and kisses”?

Source: *Microbiome*



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## All the latest in environmental issues



### KOALA DINING

The archaeological record tells us koalas have existed unchanged for around 30 million years. Yet, as new research has shown, even koalas have standards. The new study was done by researchers from the Australian National University, who sampled leaves from eucalypt trees in regions of the far southern coast of New South Wales and matched them against where koalas were found. The aim was to see how leaf characteristics might influence koala distribution. They found that koalas visited trees with leaves that had higher levels of available nitrogen but avoided neighbouring trees of the same species that had higher concentrations of toxic chemicals called sideroxylonals in their leaves. It appears koalas are discerning as to the quality of the leaves they eat and it's not a case of "any old eucalypt will do".

Source: *PLOS ONE*

### THE MYSTERIOUS MINERAL

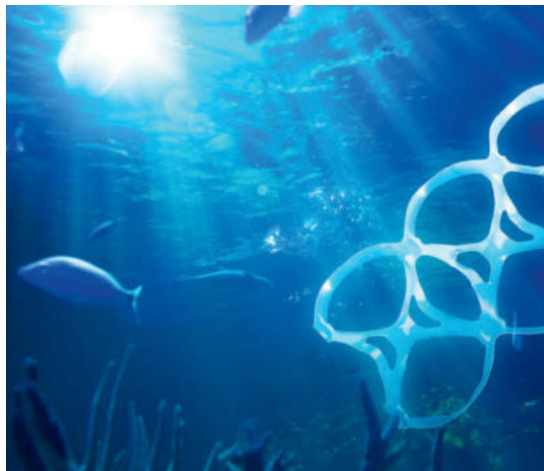
For many years now scientists have believed in the existence of a mineral that makes up about 38 per cent of the Earth's total volume but they couldn't study it because it only remains stable at depths below 660 kilometres from the surface and at pressures above 230 kilobars. However, when asteroids collide out there in deep space, the shock of the collisions creates the same conditions of deep Earth, and the shock impact occurs rapidly enough that the mineral is captured and does not break down when exposed to lower pressure. Using a sample from the Tenham meteorite, which crashed into Australia in 1879, researchers have found the mineral is a high-density form of magnesium iron silicate. They have called it Bridgmanite after Percy Bridgman, who won the 1964 Nobel prize for work in high-pressure research. It is a nice acknowledgment, but maybe "Percy" would have been a better choice.

Source: *Science*

### SPRAY-ON SOLAR

According to a new report, powering something like your tablet computer may be achieved with a spray-on solar battery. The report is based around tiny light-sensitive materials known as colloidal quantum dots (CQDs). Until now it was only possible to incorporate light-sensitive CQDs onto surfaces through cumbersome batch processing, which is inefficient and slow. What has been developed is a way of spraying CQDs onto surfaces, similar to how ink is printed onto a sheet of paper to make a newspaper. This spray-on process will make applying the CQDs easier so that, one day, powering your tablet might be as easy as wrapping it in a kind of solar clingwrap. The researcher behind the breakthrough says he has a vision that one day technicians may be able to come to your home with CQD spray packs on their backs and spray solar cells onto your roof.

Source: *Advanced Materials*



### SEAS OF PLASTIC

Researchers set out to estimate exactly how much plastic is adrift in our oceans. They collated data from 24 separate expeditions between 2007 and 2013 that used nets and visual surveys to estimate the amount of plastic in the five subtropical ocean gyres (Indian Ocean, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, North Pacific

and South Pacific) as well as off the coast of Australia, in the Bay of Bengal and in the Mediterranean Sea. Based on the accumulated data, the researchers estimate there is a minimum of 5.25 trillion plastic particles in the world's oceans, weighing a collective 269,000 tonnes. It seems the ocean gyres act as shredders of the plastics and distribute them as smaller items throughout the oceans. Once in the oceans, three bad things can be done by plastics: they can entangle creatures, be eaten by creatures or transport invasive species to places where they should not be.

Source: *PLOS ONE*

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# Chamomile: calm for nerves, skin & tummy

Chamomile is one of the most common herbs used for medicinal purposes and is also one of the oldest, most widely used and documented medicinal plants on the planet.

WORDS / DR KAREN BRIDGMAN

There are two major types of chamomile: the Roman chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*) and the German chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*). The uses of both are very similar but the more popular is the German variety. This is a low-growing, annual herbaceous plant native to southern and eastern Europe and northern and western Asia but now common in neglected fields as well as cultivated ground worldwide. Roman chamomile is a similar perennial plant.

Chamomile's name is derived from the Greek *chamos* (ground) and *melos* (apple), referring to its low-growing habit and the apple scent of its fresh blooms. Descriptions of the plant appear in the writings of Hippocrates, Dioscorides and Galen. Over the past 30 years, extensive scientific investigations have confirmed the traditional uses described by these texts.

## ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

The most popular chamomile used today is the fresh or dried flower heads of *Matricaria recutita* and various preparations made from these flowers. A few of the key constituents of chamomile are flavonoids (such as apigenin, which is anti-inflammatory and sedative/antispasmodic), volatile oils (anti-inflammatory and anti-allergy), polysaccharides (immuno-stimulating and healing) and coumarins (antimicrobial, antiviral, antifungal).

## USES & RESEARCH

### Skin

Chamomile is anti-inflammatory for the skin when applied topically, and boosts skin metabolism. It also speeds wound healing and has been used to dry out and heal dermabrasion from tattooing. In dermatology, chamomile creams and ointments have been proven to be as effective as hydrocortisone creams for neurodermatitis and inflammatory skin conditions and eczemas.

In paediatric medicine, chamomile preparations are the first choice in caring for the skin of infants and young children.

### Digestive

Chamomile has anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic activity in the digestive



system. It reduces the symptoms of diarrhoea and colic significantly, particularly in children.

Gastrointestinal symptoms are commonly associated with inflammation in conditions such as oesophageal reflux, diverticular disease and inflammatory bowel disease. Chamomile eases the smooth-muscle spasms of these disorders and is especially helpful in dispelling gas, soothing the stomach and relaxing the muscles that move food through the intestines. Research has shown that chamomile inhibits *Helicobacter pylori*, the bacterium that can lead to stomach ulcers.

### Anti-inflammatory & anti-allergic

Chamomile has shown promise in the reduction of systemic inflammation by inhibiting the important cyclooxygenase 2 (COX-2) pathway. This activity reduces multiple inflammatory reactions in the body, including allergies and pain, and helps protect against the risk of chronic disease. Chamomile has been shown to be particularly useful for skin inflammatory conditions, inflammation of the mucous membranes and gut inflammation and even in reducing the risk in cancer patients.

### Sedative & antispasmodic

Chamomile tea has a marked hypnotic effect and reduces muscle spasm. Chamomile is widely regarded as a mild tranquilliser and sleep-inducer. Sedative effects may be due to the flavonoid apigenin, which binds to benzodiazepine receptors in the brain. Studies in preclinical models have shown anticonvulsant and CNS depressant effects respectively.

### Anti-anxiety

Results from clinical trials using chamomile extract for generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) suggest it reduces anxiety in patients with mild to moderate GAD.

### Antimicrobial & antiviral

It has been claimed that chamomile can improve the immune system and clinical trials indicate its antimicrobial effect. Colds and flus are usually mild viral infectious conditions of the upper respiratory tract. Inhaling steam with chamomile extract has been shown to improve the symptoms.

### Blood sugar management

Research suggests that chamomile reduces hyperglycaemia and diabetic complications by suppressing blood sugar levels, increasing liver glycogen storage and inhibiting sorbitol in human red cells. This effect was shown to be independent of insulin secretion while chamomile was shown to have a protective effect on pancreatic beta cells by reducing the oxidative stress related to diabetes.

### Osteoporosis

To prevent the bone loss of ageing, chamomile extract was evaluated for its ability to stimulate the differentiation and mineralisation of osteoblastic (bone) cells. Chamomile improved bone mineralisation and also exhibited an anti-oestrogenic effect, suggesting an oestrogen-receptor-related mechanism for this activity.

## CONTRAINDICATIONS & SIDE-EFFECTS

None is known, although occasional allergic reactions (mainly contact dermatitis) have been recorded. Chamomile is considered safe even for babies. No restrictions are known for pregnancy or lactation. There are no recorded interactions with other drugs.

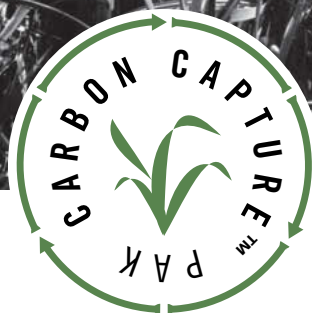
## DOSAGE & ADMINISTRATION


For chamomile tea (infusion), use 3g of the whole flower head in boiling water three to four times daily between meals. This can be drunk or used as a wash or gargle. For a chamomile bath, use 50g flowers per 10 litres of hot water, or the same dose as an inhalation. Poultices and rinses are also useful, containing 3–10 per cent of the flowers mixed in the chosen medium. 🌿

■ References available on request.

Dr Karen Bridgman is a holistic practitioner at Australian Biologics, Sydney, and Pymble Grove Health Centre, Gordon.

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## Maca: for energy & fertility

Maca root has a reputation for being a wonder food for fertility and sexual function, but it has other benefits, too.

WORDS / DR KAREN BRIDGMAN

**T**he dried tuber or hypocotyl of the maca plant (*Lepidium meyenii*) is one of the seven wonder foods — or medicines — of Peru. It was traditionally consumed as a root vegetable in the Andean region for its supposed fertility and energising benefits for both women and men. In the West, it's considered an acquired taste and is more often found as a supplement.

Cultivated exclusively at an altitude of 4000–4500 metres in the Peruvian Central Andes around Lake Junin, maca is a cruciferous plant (Brassicaceae family) related to radishes and turnips. The tuber comes in a variety of colours from black to white, yellow, red, purple and green.

While there hasn't been a large amount of research on humans, significant research has been done on laboratory animals. This animal research supports the long history of traditional use by humans living in the Andes.

Overall, scientific evidence shows that maca has nutritional, energising and fertility-enhancing properties. It improves sexual dysfunction, osteoporosis, benign prostatic hyperplasia, memory and learning and protects skin against ultraviolet radiation. Maca is a plant with great potential as an adaptogen and appears to have promise as a nutraceutical in the prevention of many conditions.

### HISTORY

Historically, maca was so important it was traded for lowland tropical food staples such as corn, rice, tapioca, quinoa and papaya. Historical records show it was used as tax payments to the Spanish.

Older stories tell of maca being eaten in large quantities by Inca warriors before going into battle, giving them formidable strength and instilling fear in the women of the cities they conquered with their excessive virility — a point not lost on today's advertising executives.

### USES AS FOOD & MEDICINE

#### Fertility & sexual function

Research has shown maca exhibits slightly different properties depending on the colour of the tuber. One study in men showed that black maca had better



effects on sperm production (as well as improving memory and reducing fatigue) than the yellow, while red maca reversed enlargement of the prostate (at least in rats). Red maca is the variety that reverses experimentally induced osteoporosis.

Maca has also been shown to improve sperm production, sperm motility and semen volume in men.

A study on female rats showed that maca enhanced the LH [luteinising hormone] serum levels of pituitary hormones at the appropriate stage of the menstrual cycle and that it acted in a pharmacological, dose-dependent manner. These findings supported the traditional use of maca to enhance fertility and delineated a potential molecular mechanism responsible for its effects.

#### Antidepressant & enhancing depression-related libido

A study was done on 20 depressed women and men and it was shown that maca root may alleviate sexual dysfunction related to depression. The root was also effective in the subjects who were taking antidepressant medication and thus felt their sexuality was affected. Taking maca improved their symptoms and the effects were dose related. Maca also showed a beneficial effect on libido generally.

In human studies, randomised clinical trials have shown that maca has favourable effects on energy and mood and may lower anxiety and improve sexual desire.

#### Menopause

As much of the research focuses on measuring hormonal change through the use of maca, an interesting Australian study showed that maca reduced psychological symptoms, including anxiety and depression, and lowered measures of sexual dysfunction in postmenopausal

women — independent of estrogenic and androgenic activity.

#### Energy & mood

Black maca is considered the strongest in energy- and stamina-promoting properties, being both sweet and slightly bitter in taste.

Maca reduces glucose levels, and its consumption is related to the lowering of blood pressure and an improved health score. In both men and women, maca has shown positive effects on fertility, nutritional status, memory and mood.

#### Thyroid

Maca contains glucosinolates (as do many of the members of the mustard family), which can cause goitres (goitrogenic), particularly in diets low in iodine; however, the tuber contains reasonable amounts of iodine, which may balance this effect.

Darker-coloured maca roots (red, purple, black) contain large amounts of natural iodine — a 10g serving of dried maca typically has 52µg of iodine. It is this that may avoid the growth of goitres due to consumption of the lighter-coloured maca.

#### Antiviral

Maca has been shown to protect against the common flu viruses, Type A and Type B, making it a useful addition to a winter protection program.

### CONTRAINDICATIONS & SIDE EFFECTS

Maca is generally considered a plant food of low potential toxicity. However, in the Amazon, indigenous tribes traditionally eat large amounts of these tubers along with St Mary's Thistle (silymarin), so studies were conducted to see if this had any benefit. What was found is that eating maca, particularly in high doses, can cause a rise in blood pressure and liver enzymes in sensitive people, whereas this was not an issue if they were consumed with silymarin, as the silymarin appears to protect against any potential side-effects.

That said, experimental studies have shown that with both short- and long-term consumption there is no in vivo or in vitro toxicity. ☺

■ References available on request.

Dr Karen Bridgman is a holistic practitioner at Australian Biologics, Sydney, and Pymble Grove Health Centre, Gordon.

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## The No Poo do

Forgoing shampoo may seem like the choice of a radical few but the No Poo movement means more than just extra time to play.

WORDS / DANIELLE KIRK

**I**s your hair your crowning glory? Do you swish your freshly washed tresses around luxuriously so they land oh-so-perfectly around your face, just like those incredibly glossy women on the telly? Maybe that's a bit far-fetched but, even if you don't consider yourself blessed in the hair department, you most likely wash it regularly. Unless you're among the beauty enthusiasts and environmentalists leading the No Poo charge: people who are caring for their hair by not washing it with shampoo.

If this is the first you've heard of No Poo (that's short for "no shampoo", by the way), just Google it. At the time of writing, I get a solid 8.5 million results. This alternative hair-care phenomenon has been around for a while but it seems to have really hit its stride in the past year or so.

The reasoning behind letting your locks go suds-free is that your scalp naturally regulates its oil production. When you over-wash your hair, the scalp's sebaceous glands release extra sebum to stop the hair drying out, which leads to greasy hair, which leads to you shampooing it again, which leads to ... a never-ending cycle. By leaving natural oils in the hair instead, rather than stripping them out, you allow the scalp and hair to regain its innate equilibrium. The end result — after a transition period, aka oil-slick central — is supposed to be stronger, healthier hair.

No Poo is also part of a wider movement: individuals who are standing up to corporations that are inundating the Earth with plastic waste and toxins, and promising health and beauty to people that they can't provide.

It's a method certainly worth road-testing — even if the initial reaction is a grimace. Fortunately for me, my hairdo of choice is a ponytail and I've only recently discovered how to use a hairdryer. I do like grease-free hair, though, and have been using an organic shampoo every two days ... so this one may be tricky.

### PUTTING IT TO THE TEST

After researching online and asking



**In the hope my hair rebalances itself earlier, I decide to wash just with water and use the occasional shampoo alternative.**

friends (devotees and anecdotes abound), I discover two main ways to come off shampoo. One is to go cold turkey: stop using shampoo and conditioner entirely, even the natural varieties, and rinse your hair with plain old H<sub>2</sub>O. The second method is to wash with a bicarbonate-of-soda-and-water solution or another gentle shampoo alternative, and condition using an apple cider vinegar rinse to restore the hair's pH balance.

The other trick to a successful switch seems to be to brush regularly with a bristle brush in order to stimulate the scalp and distribute the oils along the hair shaft.

As for that transition period I mentioned? Apparently, it can last 2–6 weeks, depending on what products you've used in the past and how frequently you've washed your hair. In the hope my hair rebalances itself earlier, I decide to wash with just water and use the occasional shampoo alternative.

By day three my hair's a grease trap, so I take to swimming in the ocean daily before rinsing with clean water. My scalp feels itchy and has some white buildup, but I brush and tie my hair back each morning and soldier on. That weekend, though, I have a wedding and can't face turning up with greasy, slightly smelly hair, so I "wash" it with baking soda and rinse with ACV. It feels squeaky-clean.

Week two and three are oily ones — and I do cheat by rubbing in a few sprinkles of cornflour as a dry shampoo. On the bright side, my hair's ideal for a "slicked back" look, so I rock a daily bun. I wash my tresses with water every two days then spritz on a water and essential oil blend; the sebum smell is fine but this just helps me feel a little nicer. My ends are dry, despite furious brushing, so I also start leaving a smidge of coconut oil on the tips overnight for added moisture.

On day 19, it's time for another wash. There are plenty of DIY shampoo recipes in the blogosphere but I try washing my hair with a raw egg then rinsing with ACV. It sounds bizarre but the result is shiny, silky hair (that, surprisingly, doesn't smell like salad dressing at all!).

Six weeks in and my hair is starting to look normal and, while it's still slightly greasy, it's almost ready to wear down. Its condition is also much, much better than it was before this experiment and all I've used is three eggs, a couple of splashes of vinegar, two tablespoons of bicarb soda, a dollop of coconut oil and a quarter of a cup of cornflour — almost enough to bake a cake.

One person whose story has spurred me on is Lucy Aitken Read, a British blogger and activist — a very stylish one at that, with lush red locks — who hasn't washed her hair for two years. She's written a book about her experiment, *Happy Hair: The Definitive Guide to Giving up Shampoo*, and blogs at lulastic.co.uk. She might inspire you, too.

Is No Poo the way forward? I'll get back to you in a year. 🍷



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## Shine brighter

**Dwayne Martens, the man who started Amazonia and runs it alongside Chris Norden, chats with us about their expanding natural supplement range.**

### **Tell us a bit about your background.**

I'm originally from South Africa, where my family and I lived on a produce farm. When I was 13 I moved to Australia. I was told Australia was a land of opportunity and when I first landed in the country I remember finding \$2 at the airport. That in South Africa was about 20 rand, which was quite a lot of money for me to find. I lived on a small farm in Western Australia until I moved to Perth to study health science. I went travelling for a few years and during that time read many mindset books. I came back to Australia with a belief in myself that I can do anything and get through any situation. I was confident enough to follow my dreams. Australia really has been a land of opportunity for me and I feel very grateful to live here.

### **How did the Amazonia journey unfold for you?**

It all began out the back of a little organic restaurant in Fremantle in 2008. Açaí was my first product and I packaged bulk bags of the berries to sell at the markets. Fast-forward a few years and we now sell to 1000 cafes and juice bars around Australia and we've recently launched our Raw products. Creating a completely natural supplement range has been a strong vision of mine for a long time and it feels great to have that come to fruition.

### **Where are your ingredients sourced and the products made?**

We source our ingredients from Australia and all over the world. Most of our products use red algae as a base ingredient and we source that off the coast of Iceland. We source açaí from the Amazon rainforest and our coconuts from Thailand. All our products are made locally in New South Wales.

### **How do you come up with your blends?**

There is a lot of consultation that goes on. We work with naturopaths, nutritionists, herbalists and doctors to get a very professional opinion on our ingredients. We look at issues such as digestion,



unhealthy gut bacteria and parasites to create a product that not only tastes great but can also provide a full solution to maintaining one's wellbeing.

### **On your website it mentions you supply six hospitals with Amazonia products. Which products are these?**

We offer the hospitals our Raw and Açaí range, so products such as the Greens and Multi blend. Our ambition is to bring more nutrition into hospitals. We want to reduce the number of people affected by lifestyle issues such as heart disease and cancer and do so by bringing awareness, education and nutrition into their daily lives.

### **Where do you think the health and wellness industry is headed?**

It is absolutely on the rise. More and more people are suffering from lifestyle disease than ever before and we need to understand the important role good nutrition plays. People are intelligent. They are getting healthier, making better choices for their bodies and really leading the way.

### **How does Amazonia embrace sustainable practices?**

There are 6.1 million acres of açaí naturally occurring in the Amazon rainforest and

we harvest only 4000 acres of that. Because we harvest by hand — no machines are needed — we don't even need to build roads as the açaí trees are river dwelling. The local community owns the rainforest and gains a large income from each harvest. This hugely improves their livelihood. For our coconuts, we harvest 2000 acres in Thailand. Our suppliers have certified organic standards, so no harmful pesticides leach into the environment, and they also recycle the coconut husks. The farmers grow fish in the estuaries underneath the coconut trees and have introduced natural beehives, birds and insects to create an ecosystem that works harmoniously with nature. Also, the açaí berry is 95 per cent seed, which provides a massive wood supply for burning. We've implemented this practice as it's much kinder to the planet than chopping down trees to burn.

### **What tools help to keep you focused?**

I meditate every day but I don't put a timeframe on it. Sometimes it's 20 seconds, sometimes it's 20 minutes. I believe when you place a timeframe on your meditation practice it becomes a chore when it should be a beautiful gift. Another practice of mine, which is a bit out there, is sun-gazing. The sun is the highest energy point in the universe and during the last 45 minutes of the day its UV is very low. You begin gazing at the sun for 10–20 seconds and slowly build your way up to 30 minutes. I get a lot of energy from this practice and it helps my mind to stay clear and focused.

### **What is next for Amazonia?**

We are about to launch our frozen cacao and coconut superfood range, so you'll be seeing those in cafes and juice bars soon. We aim for our Raw products to be the natural supplement range in Australia and for Amazonia to be known and loved internationally. We want to create more demand for tree-based organic, ethical and sustainable sources so that our ecosystems continue to thrive, essentially improving our own existence and the existence of the planet. 🌱



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**E: [jbraamsbowron@yahoo.com](mailto:jbraamsbowron@yahoo.com)**

A year spent living in the country provided both the inspiration and motivation for a new career pathway for me.

As a make-up artist and consultant for some of the leading international names in cosmetics, my working life was city-based. My decision to take time out and move from Sydney to the small central-west NSW township of Dunedoo was the start of a journey, which has taken me in a direction that's proved to be both challenging and exciting.

Using my skills with colour that had previously been acclaimed in the beauty world, I began painting to express myself, transferring my artistry from faces to canvases. In 2011, my works were featured

in Art Unlimited at Dunedoo, one of regional Australia's leading art shows, resulting in an invitation to stage a solo exhibition in Mudgee. I have exhibited my work to acclaim in three subsequent Art Unlimited exhibitions.

I moved back to Sydney in 2012 and since then have staged three solo exhibitions on the North Shore, where my vibrant work is recognised and sought after for the joy and energy it expresses.

My year in the country gave me the chance to follow my passion and the courage to take a new creative path. I am inspired by a quote attributed to philosopher Howard Thurman: "Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

I feel that my artworks celebrate my sense of coming alive.

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# LESSONS OF HEALING

Author Bronnie Ware has inspired millions by sharing the messages of regret-free living from people who are dying, and the way she handles challenges in her own life is equally uplifting.

WORDS / AMY TAYLOR-KABBAZ

**O**f all the people in the world, you would think Bronnie Ware was the least likely to need another lesson on how to live every day to the full.

As the author of *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying*, she became an international success. Her list of the most common regrets she encountered while nursing the dying was published in newspapers and online around the world. Hundreds of bloggers latched onto it and it was seen by, quite literally, millions of people around the globe.

Her reflections on working with the dying had given her deep insights into life and had not only healed her own pain but had also inspired many others to rethink how they lived their lives.

Lesson learnt, right?

Not for Bronnie. Not long after her wildly successful blog, and consequent bestselling book, had brought her international success, life sent her another challenge. Ware began to suffer from the extreme pain and debilitation of rheumatoid arthritis, to the point where she was unable to put her bare feet on the ground for two years. But rather than accept the fate of a lifetime of pain and restrictions, Ware dug even deeper and found the blessings in her illness.

"Don't get me wrong. There have been moments when I've thought, 'Oh, come on. Enough already.' But at the same time, I feel so rewarded and so blessed because of what has happened to me."

## TWO BLESSINGS

Rewind three years and Bronnie Ware was in the middle of the two greatest achievements of her life: creating a self-published international bestseller and about to give birth to her first and only child at 45. While it would seem a

blessing to have both successes in your life, in reality Ware felt overwhelmed with the global media attention her work was receiving and was anxious about juggling it all with new motherhood.

"At about 11 o'clock the night before my daughter was born, I finally closed my computer and turned my phone off and said a really clear prayer. Well, actually, it was probably more of a demand than a prayer — I was so desperate for something to happen! I just said, 'Enough. I can't do this on my own any more. I need help now.'"

"I felt quite sad as I'd worked so hard to get where I was and connect with such a large audience on my own, but I was also about to become a first-time mum at the age of 45 and I wanted to be a very present mum. But, in truth, I felt like I couldn't be fully present with the two miraculous things that were unfolding in my life at that time."

She gave birth to her daughter just before midday the very next day and, when she finally decided to turn her phone back on, there were again messages from media all over the world.

"But, as I turned my phone on, another call came through and, even though I don't usually answer an unknown number, for whatever reason I decided to answer this one. And it was Leon [Nacson] from Hay House Australia, offering me an international publishing deal with Hay House."

Prayer answered.

"I burst into tears, and then the baby started crying, and when Leon asked me how old she was, I cried, 'I just had her this morning!'"

## DOING THE WORK

This is the typical "overnight success" that took 14 years. Ware had not only

self-published her wildly successful first book before Hay House made that fateful phone call, but she had also spent years reflecting on her own lessons from working so closely with the dying in palliative care.

Before she began working with the dying, Ware had spent time in various careers, included mixing cocktails on a tropical island, management in the banking sector, selling insurance and teaching songwriting to prisoners. While songwriting was, and still remains, a great passion, it wasn't until she started writing about her own lessons learnt from being with people in their last moments of life that she found a way to comfortably share her message.

And heal her own life. Including the suicidal thoughts she'd had before turning her life around through her work as a carer.

Her latest book is *Your Year for Change: 52 Reflections for Regret-Free Living* (Hay House), written not only for the huge fan base from her first book but also for what Ware hopes is an additional audience who are time poor and unable to commit to a lot of reading, but are ready for change.

"Considering where I was in my life when I wrote this, I am very proud of it. I feel very blessed that the book flowed through me as it did." Especially in light of just how sick she has been.

"I really believe that it comes down to readiness and timing, and I have had that confirmed over and over again in my life. The dream is waiting to happen; it just comes down to readiness. I had a lot of fear associated with success and being a public figure in the early days, but I have this enormous drive to have my message heard. That is what has





“There have been moments when I’ve thought, ‘Oh, come on. Enough already.’ But at the same time, I feel so rewarded and so blessed.”

kept me going. And I am so much more comfortable in this medium — being an author — than I ever was as a singer-songwriter performing in nightclubs at 10 o’clock at night.”

Songwriting still plays an important part in Ware’s life. She runs online courses, teaches workshops and still writes for herself. “Songwriting is still a very healthy expression for me. I haven’t closed the door on that, but the truth is it’s a really hard slog for a songwriter in

Australia.” Now, her biggest audience is her three-year-old daughter.

“I’m in such a joyous place in my life, truth be told, that I don’t have a lot of sad songs of my own to share.”

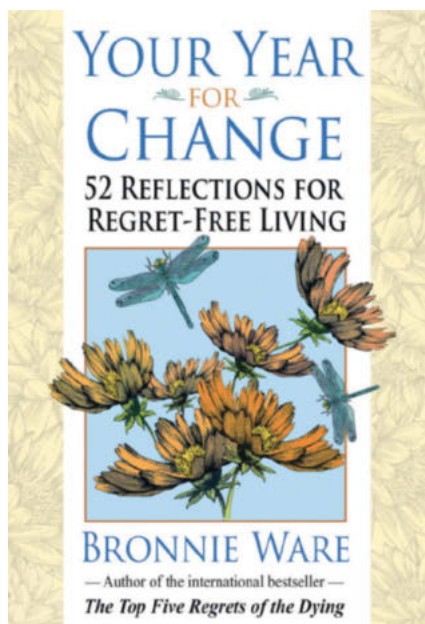
#### **LIGHT WITHIN THE DARK**

That’s Ware’s typical take on things. She sees the lessons within the challenging times: the light within the dark.

“The last few years have really taught me gratitude. I was always

an advocate for simple living, but it’s enhanced my determination and my ability for simple living. My health has improved in the past few months and I’ve put on some weight, which is really good, because I was really crook for a while there.

“But all of the lessons I have gone through with my health I am now incorporating in my being ... Now, I make choices that are based on not necessarily my health restrictions but



my wellbeing. I will say, 'Well, I'm not going to do that, not because I can't any more but because I don't want to.' So I'm very grateful to being ill.

"There were so many parts of my being that needed clearing that I didn't know needed clearing. I thought I had got rid of it and worked through it already. And I realise now that I'm starting to move past a place of peace and into a place of joy.

"Yes, I still have physical restrictions through having rheumatoid arthritis, but I'm actually in such a joyous place — and I don't think I could have done that without being so ill."

The extent of Ware's debilitation is hard to imagine. She tells of the months she had to watch her young daughter walk along the beach holding someone else's hand, as she couldn't physically walk with her.

"Only in the last month I have been able to sit on the ground again — I wasn't able to sit on the ground or floor for over two years unless someone helped me down and up. Now I can get up if I have something nearby. So now, if I go to the beach with my daughter, I take a folding chair with me, as I know I can get myself down, but I need that chair to get myself back up again."

Getting back up again is what Ware does best.

After spending two years trying to heal solely through natural and metaphysical means, she eventually realised that she needed to surrender and ask for more help. She has since found a rheumatologist who supports her natural healing techniques with Western medicine. "And I'm doing much better."

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**"When I see how alive we are when we're born, and yet how dead a lot of adults are even when they are still alive, it just makes me even more determined to live in a ridiculously fun and great way."**

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Ever positive, though, Ware is, of course, hopeful for remission one day.

"It is what it is, and you've got to get on with the cards you've been dealt. It's not a failure to be sick. It's not a failure to be unable to heal the way you think you're going to heal. And now I make a lot more conscious decisions about my life that I wouldn't have made before.

"A big lesson I've come to throughout all of this is that it's OK to want an easy life and it's OK to ask for an easy life. Just because you can do it hard doesn't mean you have to. And I think that was what was happening a bit in my life: I was really strong and life kept throwing challenges at me and I just kept getting back up again. And then one day I thought to myself, 'This is ridiculous. Just because you can do it tough doesn't mean you have to.'"

It was this realisation that has led her to start medication for her illness and be unapologetic about her needs.

"I hope that after this it's an easy chapter! I think it will be. I think I needed to come to this point when I completely accepted that just because I can do it tough doesn't mean I have to. We live in a society in which you are almost classified lazy if you say you want an easy life. Whereas I don't think it should be about the physical work, but the internal work. If you're willing to do that work, then the rest does become easy."

#### GRATITUDE & SIMPLICITY

Ware now spends her days with her daughter on a property not far from where she grew up. She is currently working on her third book — "This one is all about gratitude" — and living a simple life.

"I'm so blessed to have had the contrast of death and birth in my life. When I see how alive we are when we're born, and yet how dead a lot of adults are, even when they are still alive, it just makes me even more determined to live in a ridiculously fun and great way. I'm just shaking the shackles off and, the more I hang out with my daughter, the more ridiculous I am becoming — and I love it!

"I know how short life is. I've been very blessed with that gift. I know that whether you die at 30, 50, 70 or 90, when you realise your life is over, you have that moment of thinking, 'Hooley dooley, it can't be over! It was too short!' And through being with the dying, being very ill and now being a mother to a very alive little toddler, I just want to live it. I just want to live every moment as wonderfully as I can. I'm into living much more than I'm into dying." 🍓

*Amy Taylor-Kabbaz is a writer, speaker and creator of [happymama.com.au](http://happymama.com.au). She is the author of Happy Mama: A Spiritual Survival Guide and commentator on parenting and wellbeing. You can follow her on Twitter at @amytaylorkabbaz.*





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CHC43335-02/14



# *Saturn's power to transform*

The seven-year itch, a concept associated with Saturn, can help you create the transformations around which to build happiness.

WORDS / KELLY SURTEES







**T**he seven-year itch is a popular phenomenon in which you might find yourself reassessing a commitment or life choice seven years into the experience. Astrologers have long associated this seven-year itch with the quarter cycles of wise Saturn.

Saturn has an almost 29-year cycle. Divided by four, this gives approximately four separate seven-year intervals. The theory is that every seven years Saturn makes a trigger aspect back to its own placement seven years beforehand. This highlights anniversaries, or “birthdays”, which are multiples of seven — 7 years, 14 years, 21 years and 28–29 years — as important turning points. This anniversary may be the start of a relationship, a career, a business or living in a particular house.

For instance, if you start a new job, Saturn will be at X point in the zodiac on the day you start. Seven years later, Saturn will have moved so it makes a quarter angle, or 90-degree square aspect, back to that Saturn placement at the start of the job, like X + 7. Seven years on again, which would be 14 years on from when you started the job (X + 14), Saturn then makes another trigger aspect, this time an opposition. The exact aspect itself is less important than the energy and themes that emerge under these Saturn quarter-cycle triggers.

### TIMING WITH SATURN

Working with the seven-year itch quarter cycle of Saturn invites you into the world of predictive astrology. The timing of life events, both important beginnings and endings, can be forecast with Saturn. As you begin to follow the cycle of Saturn, you may notice a pattern emerging, where similar themes or topics recur at these seven-year intervals.

These repeated themes may reveal some of your most profound life lessons as well as show how you can create firm foundations for the future. Ideally, you will use the wisdom and experience from the events or choices made seven years ago to help inform your choices in the present. In this way, you learn and grow and put your personal accumulated wisdom into action. Timing your life to a defining cycle like that of Saturn can help you better understand your personal ebbs and flows.

### MEANING & MYTHOLOGY

Saturn is the ancient god of time. Saturn represents that which flourishes with patient, steady effort. Saturn is



**The beauty of Saturn is it helps clarify what needs to end but it also helps highlight where you are ready to start something new.**

also realistic, in that it asks you to focus on what’s practical, what’s possible and what’s likely. This may be where some of the worry associated with Saturn comes from — that often you get so swept up in the dream of what might be that you lose touch with what is.

During a Saturn seven-year itch, you become clearer on truth, honesty and reality. If you have been living in a bit of fantasy, this will make your experience at these seven-year intervals a little more challenging. This happens because Saturn will bring you back down to Earth and pop any fantasy or delusions you may have held on to. If you typically keep at least one foot on the ground and generally balance your dreams with a dose of reality, you’ll find the seven-year intervals more manageable. In an ideal world, they may even highlight periods of success or an increase in productivity.

During a Saturn seven-year-itch period you may need to be honest, with yourself and your loved ones, about what is and isn’t working in your life. This is no time to fudge the truth or try to tell yourself things are different from how they are. The key to success with Saturn lies in honouring the present. If you focus on what you can do based on where you are, you can set a lasting foundation for the future. This may involve making peace with a past disappointment so fear and worry no longer accompany you forward.

### TIME & GROWTH

The passing of time can feel acute during a Saturn period. You may feel time is slipping away or that you haven’t yet achieved all you’d hoped. The gift of one of Saturn’s seven-year cycles is to help you clarify your most important goals and restructure life so your top priorities get your best efforts

and resources. In turn, this may mean saying no to things that don’t directly support your priorities.

Saturn is associated with agriculture. The concept of sorting the wheat from the chaff is Saturn. During a Saturn seven-year-itch quarter cycle you may need to sort out the good from the draining in your own life. This may mean an honest conversation about what — and who — is and isn’t deserving of your time, attention or care. You may ask yourself probing questions like, “If goal X is important, then why am I involved in projects A, B and C?” This can lead to new honesty about priorities, roles or responsibilities you have outgrown and may need to end.

The beauty of Saturn is it helps clarify what needs to end but it also helps highlight where you are ready to start something new. This cycle can be a lovely time to rededicate yourself to a priority project that has been neglected.

I often describe a Saturn seven-year cycle to clients as a time when it’s appropriate to prune back in life, like cutting back the roses before winter. Getting rid of superfluous commitments or responsibilities gives you more time and energy to focus on what matters. This is much easier to do under a Saturn seven-year cycle. Saturn will gift you with the strength to make necessary choices and to help you put the people and promises that matter first.

Another astrologer once told me, when speaking of a Saturn transit, that it’s like “old news”. Under the seven-year itch it’s less likely that something new develops but rather you realise the time is right to make a choice about a situation or partnership that has been limping along or has been on your mind for a while. Under Saturn, you crave clarity and will search for facts or examples to help you understand a specific situation in black and white. This is not the time for shades of grey; rather, you seek truth and firmness to help you reset your direction and focus.

### DETERMINING WHEN SATURN WILL INFLUENCE YOU

Saturn’s cycle, like that of all the planets, is constant and ongoing. But you are not always affected by each planet. You will only be affected by Saturn at specific ages or stages of life.

The simple process described above, where you just add 7, 14, 21 or 28–29 years to the start date of a major event, will determine when you are experiencing a Saturn seven-year itch.



It's the fastest way to work out when you are in a Saturn cycle.

For instance, if you are married, your wedding date would be a starting point. At the 7, 14, 21 and 28–29-year anniversaries, Saturn in the sky will make one of these critical trigger aspects to Saturn in your wedding chart. Just based on these years, you now know that within the context of your marriage (or any significant partnership, either in your personal or professional life), those years will bring both tests and transformation.

In the context of a relationship, the Saturn years (the anniversaries mentioned above) are years when you may feel restless or unsettled. This is a call from your unconscious, or your higher self, that you have outgrown the current structure, form or rituals within this partnership. To honour Saturn, it's time to reassess who does what, and for what reward, and to make changes that better reflect current rather than past circumstances. It's easy to get settled in a specific relationship role, but you may forget to adapt as circumstances change. The Saturn seven-year itch is a time when you get to play catch-up with life and update your responsibilities and schedule so they honour the present rather than remain stuck in the past.

Recall some of your more memorable commitments or beginnings. Perhaps you run your own business or are in a long-term career. If so, think back to when that business started or you first took that job. If you've moved countries, think back to when that happened. Perhaps you've bought a house, moved out or started a family? The beginning point of each of those formative events is the start date to use when calculating the years in which Saturn's seven-year itch cycle will show up.

If you add 7, 14, 21 or 28–29 years to those start dates, that will tell you when you are likely to experience a Saturn quarter cycle and the energy of the seven-year itch.

### YOUR SEVEN-YEAR ITCH BY SIGN

In addition to the simple seven-year quarter cycle of Saturn, you may also like to track the influence of Saturn according to your sun or moon sign. Based on your sun or moon sign, you can construct a personal Saturn seven-year cycle by tracking forward seven years, or even by going back to seven years before that.

If you have the sun or moon in a mutable sign — Gemini, Virgo,

**Saturn can help  
you clarify what's  
possible and what's  
within your power to  
change or create.**



Sagittarius and Pisces — Saturn will influence you from January 2015 to December 2017. If your birth date falls after the 23rd of the month, you will be touched by Saturn during the first year of this period (calendar year 2015). If you were born in the first 10 days of the month, you are more likely to be touched by Saturn in 2016. If you are born between the 10th and 23rd of the month, you will most likely feel Saturn in 2017.

If you have the sun or moon in a cardinal sign — Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn — Saturn will touch your life from January 2018 to December 2020. If your birth date falls after the 23rd of the month, you will be triggered by Saturn in 2018. If you were born in the first 10 days of the month, you are more likely to be touched by Saturn in 2019. If you were born between the 10th and 23rd, you will most likely feel Saturn in 2020.

If you have the Sun or Moon in a fixed sign — Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius — Saturn will touch your life from January 2021 to March 2023. If your birth date falls after the 23rd of the month or before the 4th, you will be touched by Saturn during 2021. If you were born between the 4th and 18th of the month, you will be triggered by Saturn in 2022. If you were born between the 19th and 23rd of the month, you will feel Saturn in early 2023.

### SURVIVING & THRIVING WITH SATURN

Saturn holds a special place in the cosmos. It represents the boundary between the known and the unknown. With the naked eye you can see as far out in the solar system as Saturn, but not beyond. Thus, Saturn can help you clarify what's possible and what's within your power to change or create.

When the energy of Saturn shows up via one of his important quarter cycles, it's a sign you are ready for adjustment and new focus. Tuning in to the call of Saturn can help you stay focused on your goals and create lasting stability. When Saturn comes knocking, don't be shy about showing an old dream, goal or situation the door. Doing so will give you back energy and drive to devote time to what really counts, whether that's a forgotten project or a new endeavour. In this way, the turning points of Saturn can become the transformations around which you build happiness. Embrace Saturn and you embrace the call of your future. 🍁

*Kelly Surtees is writer, astrologer, teacher and editor who loves reading, writing and escaping into the ocean. She travels regularly between Australia and Canada. Visit [kellysurtees.com](http://kellysurtees.com) or [facebook.com/KellySurteesAstrology](https://facebook.com/KellySurteesAstrology), or follow her on Twitter: @keldreamer.*



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# LOVE WHAT YOU DO

You spend one-third of your life working so why not do something you love?  
If you don't know what career would spark up your life, or your beliefs are holding you back from pursuing your passion, here's some help.

WORDS / SONIA ZADRO

*"It seems to me that in the last analysis there are only two choices: Macbeth's contention that life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing, and Pierre Teilhard's 'something is afoot in the universe, something that looks like gestation and birth'. Either there is a plan and purpose — and that plan and purpose can best be expressed by the words 'life' and 'love' — or we live in a cruel, arbitrary and deceptive cosmos in which our lives are a brief transition between two oblivions."*

~ Andrew Greeley,  
***The Courage of Conviction***

Andrew Greeley, priest, sociologist, journalist and popular novelist, paints a black-and-white perspective. Either you can embrace your calling and live a life bursting with love, joy and purpose — or not and live a life mired in meaninglessness and despair.

I would think a person's future is more complex than this, with more ups and downs and shades of grey, but the quote does capture the idea that your potential to aspire to your greatest joy or to live a small unfulfilled life is in your hands. Of those two possibilities, which are you currently closest to?

## A SEARCH FOR MEANING

Viktor Frankl was a psychoanalyst who survived the concentration camps of the Second World War. During his time in captivity, he observed the other prisoners and noticed that their survival didn't necessarily relate to their degree of malnourishment but rather their will: whether they had some purpose that motivated them to stay alive so it could be fulfilled if they survived the horrors of the camp. For some it was to see their children, for others it was to write a book or pursue a career.

Frankl survived the camp and began a whole field of therapy around the





notion that the search for meaning and purpose is fundamental to happiness. He called his theory logotherapy: that life, even at its most miserable, has meaning, and the main motivation for living is the will to discover that meaning.

Often people wait for their lives to be in absolute crisis before they feel forced to grab life by the horns and ask, "I don't have much time left, I'm not around for long — what is it that I really want to do?" This may be in the face of a cancer scare or a serious accident.

But why wait for a major life crisis? Ask yourself right now, "Why do I get up in the morning? What really gives me meaning? What do I want my life to be about? What is the single most important thing?"

The answer is usually the people you love and who love you. But what about what you do for a living? Does it fill you with energy or does it make you feel drained? Perhaps you don't mind it; it pays the bills and has some perks but doesn't really energise you.

According to research from the Department of Education, Science and Training, most Australians will change career seven times in their lives. And some people pursue more than one career simultaneously. Given that we spend approximately one-third of our total lives working, we'd be crazy not to follow a career that fills us with energy and purpose.

### WHAT GIVES YOU JOY?

Work that gives you purpose does not have to be grandiose but, if you seek to do more of it regardless of payment, then you know you are on the right path.

This became very clear to me when I worked as a TAFE counsellor for many years. I'll never forget the client who came in looking utterly depressed, withdrawn and hopeless, stating, "I want to be the person that stitches the material together on car seats." He spoke of the attention to detail with the work and the idea of putting the pieces of fabric together to mould to the shape of the car. He had enrolled in the trade that enabled him to do this. His father discovered his career choice and forbade him from pursuing it: "This is not a man's work. A man does not sew for a living." But it was all that my client wanted to do. When he spoke about it, his eyes lit up and his face filled with enthusiasm.

This made me realise that the notion that people shouldn't define themselves

by their career is not correct. Sure, there's more to you than what you do for a living, but what drives you in life, how you express your passion and joy in your work, says so much about you as a person. As such, it's important to honour these passions and feelings — not dismiss them as just dreams; not minimise, belittle or judge them. As with any feelings, they are there for a good reason: they are trying to communicate something to you. Listen to them.

Sometimes, if you seek your parents' advice, they can have the attitude of, "Oh yes, that's a nice dream. You can do that as a hobby but you need a real career to bring in the money." Such parents are well intentioned and practical but they can also be dream-killers. Common sense and realism have an important place — of course, if you're broke and need to support a family then finding a stable source of income is a must — but that doesn't mean you should give up completely on pursuing what you love. And keep in mind that when your work is something you love it generates its own energy and with that it usually generates its own income.

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**Your potential to aspire to your greatest joy or to live a small unfulfilled life is in your hands. Of those two possibilities, which are you currently closest to?**

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The idea that you should do only what you love as a hobby isn't the only belief blocking people from experiencing joy in work. Others include the following: "I'm not good enough." "I could never aspire to that; it's too ambitious." "What will everyone think of me?" "Women don't do that." "Men don't do that." "People will judge me or laugh at me." "Everyone wants to be a singer or a painter or a model or an actor; there are too many people doing it and it's too competitive — I'll never really make it." The list goes on.

At the end of the day, the one thing that stood out to me as a careers counsellor is that what motivates you and fills you with life in your work is not something that motivates other people. The joy you feel when engaging in your chosen passion is unique to you. By giving yourself permission to express this joy, you are honouring your life.

### HOW TO GET STARTED

If you're clear about what you want in your career but are not pursuing it, you may need to look at your blocking beliefs. If you're not honest about your excuses and fears, they will block you your entire life.

In their book *Soul Work: Finding the Work You Love, Loving the Work You Have*, Deborah Bloch and Lee Richmond suggest that the following questions may help:

- What do I need to let go of in my life to move forward?
- What will I miss out on if I don't move towards what gives me energy?
- What is the balance between risk and security?

On the other hand, fears and negative beliefs are one thing but some people just don't know what they want to do. Even when they've reached 30 or 40 they can't identify their passion.

If you're one of these people, a good place to start is by closing your eyes and thinking carefully about the following question: "If you could do anything at all in the world, if there were absolutely no limits — that is, you had unlimited money, talent and confidence and there were no obstacles in your way, no obstacles from those around you, and you had no doubts or fears within you — what would you do?"

If you come up with a clear answer then you should listen; it's at least heading you in the right general direction. You might come up with "astronaut" and know you're absolutely hopeless at maths and science. But it still could be a clue to a related career.

If however you still come up with nothing, then it's time to turn to some practical resources to give you some ideas. It's good to consult these sources anyway unless you have a very clear sense of what you want to do. Career questionnaires are a good place to start.

Some questionnaires focus on personality and what type of career your personality type would suit. The Myers-Briggs test is a popular choice here. It examines four scales: extraversion/introversion, sensory/intuitive, thinking/feeling and judging/perceiving. On completion you end up with one of 16 combinations and these are then matched to certain careers. You can do this usually for a small fee online. A good place to start is the website [personalitypage.com](http://personalitypage.com), which charges US\$5.



There's more to you than what you do for a living, but what drives you in life, how you express your passion and joy in your work, says so much about you as a person.

John Holland's Self-Directed Search questionnaire is based on the idea that people seek environments that let them express their skills, abilities, attitudes and values and take on roles which appeal to them. He defines six "types" of people: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.

An example of a category is that "realistic" people are often frank,

practical and persistent and like jobs such as car mechanic, electrician or aircraft controller. These people often have mechanical ability but may lack social skills. This questionnaire costs US\$9.95 to complete online at [self-directed-search.com](http://self-directed-search.com).

Other career questionnaires focus on everyday preferences such as, "Do you like working indoors or outdoors?"

A good one to try is the Career Voyage because it provides 40 specific career options at the end with practical related information. It takes about 30 minutes to complete and you can find it online through the Western Sydney Institute (WSI) of TAFE ([wsi.tafensw.edu.au](http://wsi.tafensw.edu.au)) or WSI's Open Training and Education Network ([oten.tafensw.edu.au](http://oten.tafensw.edu.au)).

A good general website for up-to-date career information is [joboutlook.gov.au](http://joboutlook.gov.au): just type in the occupation and search. It will let you know the personality skills needed for the job, as well as job earnings, size, prospects and training required.

Finally, if you're still not certain about what direction to take, don't despair. Gather information about yourself through career questionnaires, then trust your intuition and simply try something. So often we may not be certain about a path until we actually follow it. We might think we'll love it but it turns out to be different from what we expected. Or we might be unsure about it and love it when we start doing it. This is normal. At the end of the day, if you value how you spend a third of your life, then spend it with energy and purpose. 🍀

*Sonia Zadro is a clinical psychologist with 20 years' experience and a freelance writer. She is interested in helping people heal and opening their minds through science. For further information, see [soniazadro.com](http://soniazadro.com).*

### LIFE PURPOSE EXERCISE

Imagine two timelines before you, stretching out to your last day on this planet at the other end of the room.

Timeline A represents your positive timeline. Its last day represents your ideal last day, in that everything you've wanted to achieve in this life has been achieved. This includes your work: you have pursued a career that has filled you with excitement and meaning.

Timeline B represents your life not fully lived: your regrets with regard to your life, including your work. Imagine what might make up this timeline and some of the reasons for these unfulfilled dreams.

Walk to the last day of timeline B. How does this feel? How does your body feel physically? Feel your regrets, your dissatisfaction.

Now slowly walk towards timeline A and, once you're standing on it, feel

what it's like to live the life you always wanted. Breathe into it. How does your body feel? Light? Heavy? Tense with fear? Tingling with excitement? If negative feelings come up, ask, "What is this tension or heaviness about? What am I afraid of? Why do I feel burdened?" Your body provides the truest expression of your feelings and truth. Then ask yourself, "What quality do I need to get closer to my dreams? Is it belief in myself, self-love or courage? What colour is this quality?" Very slowly step into this quality and colour and feel it move through all your cells. How does your body physically feel now?

Which timeline are you more aligned with in your life at the moment: fulfilling your dreams or a life of regrets? If you're on the path of regret, what would it take for you to change your life?



# “WHOLEFOODS OUTPERFORM MULTIVITAMINS ANY DAY”



Paul Harper, age 46,  
BHSc; Nutritionist, Metabolic Analyst,  
[paulharpernd.com](http://paulharpernd.com)

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**W**hen it comes to the idea of success, having a fear of failure is often the most talked-about topic and often the most obvious. The fear of trying and not succeeding is an anxiety-inducing experience that most of us have faced, or will face, in our lifetimes.

The fear of success is a more discreet form of fear, more intricate in nature yet likely to frustrate the search for fulfilment and happiness. A fear of being successful is one that can form in your subconscious mind and impede your ability to achieve the success you deserve. A fear of succeeding in something you are passionate about is an internal roadblock that you may not even be aware you have.

### HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

Before you can define what success is and ascertain if you are afraid of it, you need to spend a little time on how you actually view success. The concept of success is a very personal one. For one person, success may be raising a happy and healthy family, whereas others may view success as reaching the top of the corporate ladder. The concept of success can be as simple or as complicated as the person defining it perceives it to be.

Certified life and performance coach, Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) practitioner and Matrix Therapist, Vanessa Talbot, says success is different for each individual: "While a Ferrari in the garage may mean success to one, a quiet country cottage in nature may be success to another. What's important is that we know what success means to us as individuals. Success is knowing what you want out of life, and living it."

### FEAR OF FAILURE

The fear of failure is a natural state of mind for many of us. Who hasn't been scared they wouldn't get the job they wanted or pass their driver's test? Being afraid of not being able to achieve a goal is natural, but letting it keep you from moving forward in life can be limiting.

"The fear of failure is a mindset that keeps people stuck in their comfort zones, never achieving or moving forward. It is the fear of working toward your goal but not being able to attain it," explains counsellor, holistic health expert and author Luke Sheedy. "You also fear the consequences of failure in that it opens you to ridicule and judgement from others, usually at the peril of your own happiness, inner fulfilment or reaching your true potential."

# FEAR OF HEIGHTS

In a world where "success" is viewed as a most desirable goal, who would have thought that, of all the fears we have in our lives, success could be one of them?

WORDS / KATE MCKEE

"A fear of success is closely aligned to a fear of failure in that they both hold you back from achieving your goals and reaching your full potential," he says.

### FEAR OF SUCCESS

The fear of success is a sneakier fear compared to the fear of failure, as it affects us in a subconscious way. "Fear of failure is associated with making mistakes and not getting approval. Fear of success is the fear of doing things right and therefore not being accepted, not being appreciated and not being able to maintain the level of achievement and success," says life coach, educator, author and motivational speaker Ronit Baras. "Fear of success is when the pain of achieving something we want is greater than not achieving it."

Psychologist and inner voice expert Angela Bradley explains further: "Fear of success usually occurs at a subconscious level and involves self-sabotaging behaviours that unwittingly prevent you from dealing with the possible negative spinoff effects of reaching a goal or becoming successful."

Such self-sabotaging behaviours can include negative self-talk, unrealistic perfectionism and pessimism: ways in which you may subconsciously hold yourself back due to the perceived risk of achieving success and the consequences that may arise from this.

### WHY ARE YOU SCARED?

Fearing success can be anything from a fear of change to trepidation at standing out from the crowd to dread of living up to others' expectations and the pressure triggered by this. Sheedy believes it's common to fear success and what will occur if one is successful, or "makes it".

"In our competitive and success-driven society, we don't acknowledge

that success can be overwhelming or daunting," he says. "A fear of the unknown can sabotage our efforts to be successful. Fear creates blocks that prevent us from achieving success."

### Fear of change

The fear of change can often cause you to stay in a negative or stagnant situation long after you should. A fear of change can refer to altering an aspect of your life and the consequences of this, or the fear that you may change if you accomplish your aims.

"Sometimes we just fear change and therefore fear what success might bring, such as loneliness, less time with family or working longer hours. We like the status quo; while we aspire to achieve our goals, perhaps the fear of change is so great that failing seems the better option in comparison," says Sheedy.

Another fear linked to success and change is the fear of compromising who you are and changing as a person; for example, "selling out" your principles for a bigger pay cheque or abusing power and/or influence. "This is an identity-level fear," says Baras. "People have it when they think success will 'force' them to compromise on who they are, their values, their time. It will result in many excuses about why success will make you dishonest and not true to yourself."

### Tall poppy syndrome

Tall poppy syndrome is alive and well today and can discourage many people from going after their goals for fear of being "seen", judged and subsequently torn down because of this.

"We all want to belong and feel accepted by our colleagues and friends; success can be feared as it will make us stand out from the crowd and perhaps lead to jealousy," says Sheedy.

Tall poppy syndrome also plays into being fearful of the expectations of





“Fear of success is when the pain of achieving something we want is greater than not achieving it.”

others, Sheedy continues. “Success can bring added pressure, stress and higher expectations to continue to perform for further, future success. This can open us up to criticism and judgement from our peers, so we play it safe. This can lead to a debilitating paralysis of self-doubt.”

#### **Pressure to maintain & extend success**

The idea that once you have achieved success you have to work even harder to keep it can be a daunting prospect. Is enough ever enough? Now that you have achieved “more” do you need to attain “more, more”? Will it ever stop?

“Another fear associated with fear of success is the need to maintain it,” says Baras. “This happens when people believe the toughest part of success is constantly fearing they will lose it.” The idea that gaining more in life means having more to lose can stop many from achieving in the first place.

#### **Imposter syndrome**

Another theory related to the fear of success is the imposter syndrome. “This is when people develop a belief that their success is not real and they live in fear others will discover they are not

really good at what they do and they are only pretending to be successful,” says Baras. Those who fear being caught out or uncovered distinguish between having “fake success” and “real success”.

#### **Heavy cost of success**

What will you have to give up for success? The fact that there may be negative consequence imposed on your life due to success, such as less time with the kids, can often deter many from striving forward. According to Talbot, people with this mindset view success and sacrifice as one and the same.





## MIND

### FEAR OF SUCCESS

"If the pain of what they think they must do to achieve success is greater than the pleasure they feel they will get, then they'll subconsciously self-sabotage. For example, for someone wanting weight-loss success, the pain of doing without all the food they enjoy, limiting their food intake and also having to exercise can be greater than the advantages it brings."

#### Perception of success as a threat

Instead of seeing success as something positive to run towards, you may view it as a danger or threat instead, which triggers the fight-or-flight response. "When people want to achieve what they call 'success', it typically requires alternative behaviour: behaviour that is not 'normal' for them. This activates a part of their brain called the amygdala, which is responsible for the fight-or-flight response," explains Rik Schnabel, accredited NLP trainer, life coach and training director with Life Beyond Limits.

"Anything that isn't normal behaviour is overplayed in the brain as unsafe or dangerous. It signifies a threat-to-life function. Starting a new business, for example, is not a threat to one's life but, according to our amygdala, it is."

#### CAN YOU CHANGE HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT SUCCESS?

In a word, yes. You can change how you subconsciously feel about success by not just changing your attitude but also by altering your behaviour.

"Success is for everybody, not the selected few," says Sheedy. "Success is a dream fulfilled, a goal completed. We are creatures of habit and behaviour; changing those is the easiest way to live the life you've imagined. Also, by surrounding yourself with other successful people you will find out they're just normal people who had a vision with a plan of action to achieve what they wanted, believed in themselves and their abilities and, importantly, stayed positive and persevered when things got tough. Success is for you and it's found everywhere."

#### HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR FEAR Identify & clarify your "success"

It's important to identify if you are seeing someone else's version of success, or your own. "You need to know what your unique version of success is," says Talbot. "If you're chasing someone else's dreams, that dream won't have much meaning to you if you have to live it."

"Know what success means to you," she says. "It most likely isn't the same

as all your friends, parents and society. If anyone achieves success that isn't what they really want out of life, though society and others may view them as successful, that person will be discontented and unfulfilled. Happiness comes from living the life we want in our own way."

Clarify what it is about success that you are afraid of. Is it that extra work will be involved? Is it the possibility of being judged and criticised or that you will be found out as not being who others think you are? After you identify what success is to you, and what it is about success that scares you, you can start to see how you may have been self-sabotaging.

#### Change your self-talk

"The way you talk to yourself, day in and day out, creates the foundation upon which everything in your life is built. It can be your servant or your master," says Bradley. "Pay attention to what you say to yourself about being a success. Are the statements true or do they just 'feel' true and are in fact keeping you from getting ahead? Don't be afraid of, or

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**"You can't truly be successful at one thing and neglect other things like your health and wellbeing. It's like building a skyscraper but skipping the foundations."**

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be controlled by, that conversation. Take on board the constructive criticism and challenge the garbage."

It is possible to give that negative internal voice a new dialogue, Bradley affirms. "Let the old unhelpful words flow into your mind and, without grabbing them, let them wash out again. These words come from old experiences and other people's opinions. Take their power away and be the best version of yourself. Have whatever you want in life. What is the worst that can happen if you are successful? You deserve success and have a responsibility to go get it."

#### Care for your health & wellbeing

When it comes to helping yourself overcome fears, it's vital to take a holistic approach. A healthy mind and spirit only work if you have a healthy body as well. For example, how can you successfully identify and clarify your attitudes and behaviours if your body is running on zero sleep? Everything has a roll-on effect in terms of health and wellbeing — and how you deal with your fears.

"Anything that lowers your impulse control and impairs decision-making will hurt your mood and drive up fear," says Bradley. "Every decision you make about yourself and your life is linked. You can't truly be successful at one thing and neglect other things like your health and wellbeing. It's like building a skyscraper but skipping the foundations: it'll bring you undone eventually. Confident people prioritise their wellbeing and healthy people have a better chance of overcoming fears and finding success."

#### Ask questions & practise visualisation

Don't be afraid of asking yourself some questions. For example, Talbot suggests asking, "If things stay the same for me, how will my life be in one year? Five years? Twenty years?"

"Then think of having achieved your own unique idea of success and ask yourself: 'If I achieve my version of success, how will my life be in one year? Five years? Or in 20 years' time?' Life should look quite different," she says. Visualising and comparing alternative futures where you have given in to your fear of success versus conquering your fear of success can be a very enlightening exercise.

#### GETTING HELP

As with anything, fears can range in magnitude. Sometimes we all need a little help to conquer something that has been subconsciously plaguing us for a long time, and that's OK. Changing or altering your natural behaviours can be a scary task. Investing in the services of a life coach, psychologist or counsellor can help provide you with the tools you need to start living the life you want.

According to Baras, awareness is the first step to overcoming the fear of success. "Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) is very useful in treating fear of success as it involves subconscious acts of self-sabotage," he says. "It helps the person create awareness to the fear. Another tool is using NLP, which works on early experiences of success that triggered the fear."

Once you identify that you do fear success, you are already halfway there, but sometimes you may just need a little outside assistance to get past ingrained behaviours you have been unknowingly cultivating for years. 🧠

*Kate McKee is a freelance lifestyle writer who writes for a variety of print and online publications on topics ranging from natural beauty to interior design. Passionate about natural health and lifestyle, Kate loves nothing more than to share her interests and discoveries with thoughtful minds.*





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**I**n the rush of morning routines, weekly to-dos and weekend schedules, finding space and time to dedicate to your mind, body and soul may feel like a wish list unfulfilled. Yet, ensuring that you get quality “me time” can deliver big health and beauty benefits while helping foster calm in usually stressful situations.

From recharging energy and improving concentration to increasing productivity and cultivating inner balance, there’s good reason to stop and contemplate, says author Sherrie Bourc Carter, who offers women advice on how to take check in *High Octane Women: How Superachievers Can Avoid Burnout* (Prometheus Books).

In an article for *Psychology Today*, Carter says that simply stopping and adding self-love rituals to your daily routine can become a direct path to greater clarity and self-awareness.

“[This] can lead to a better understanding of yourself ... what drives you, what inspires you, what excites you,” she writes. “This in turn can have a positive effect not only on the quality of your relationship with yourself, but also on the quality of your relationships with others.”

#### WHERE TO BEGIN?

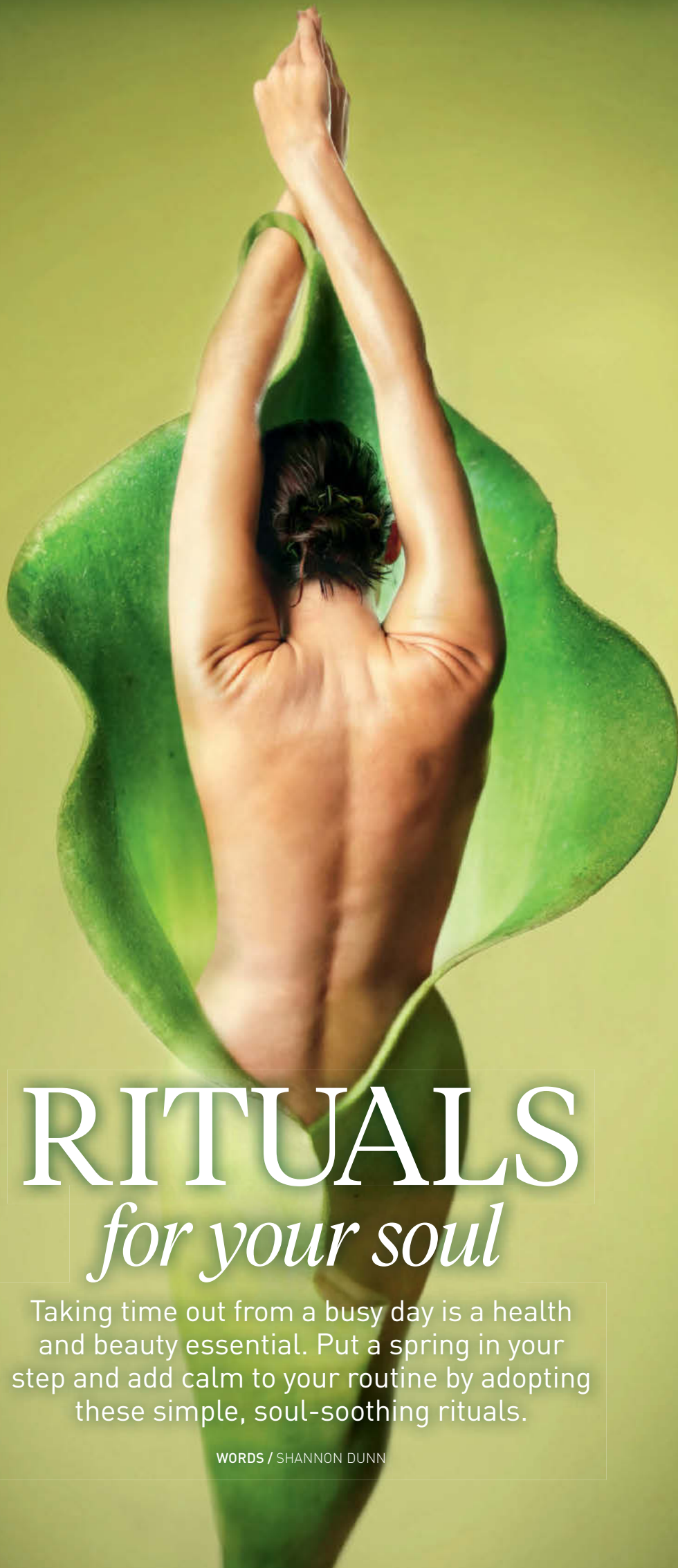
Just as everyone’s body is different, finding what brings you greatest calm and clarity is a matter of personal choice. However, there are natural laws that, if followed, suggest you will live a life of greater meaning; one that’s infused with balance, a depth of understanding, happiness and beauty from the inside out.

“A lot of times people think healthy lifestyles are about food only. It’s not just food — it’s a multiplicity of things,” says nutrition and lifestyle coach Tyler Tolman ([tylertolman.com](http://tylertolman.com)). “For thousands of years, individuals have recognised there are seven basic principles that lead to a healthy and vibrant lifestyle. I actually follow eight.”

# RITUALS *for your soul*

Taking time out from a busy day is a health and beauty essential. Put a spring in your step and add calm to your routine by adopting these simple, soul-soothing rituals.

WORDS / SHANNON DUNN







## TYLER TOLMAN'S 8 PRINCIPLES OF HEALTH

**1 Air.** Breathing deeply through the nose, into the stomach and out through the mouth creates a healthy way of breathing. It oxygenates your body, makes your body vital and alkalises you. When you're breathing deeply, you want to breathe clean air, so get some plants. Plants naturally detoxify the air around us. Studies have shown that plants eliminate benzene, formaldehyde, trifluoroethylene and all sorts of chemicals in the home and all around us. Peace lilies and the money plant (also known as a jade tree) are fantastic.

**2 Water.** Drink a litre of water every day on rising. This will hydrate your digestive system and your body. Drink one litre of water per 22kg of body weight over the day. It's also a good idea to eat a lot of high-water-content fruit such as watermelon and papaya.

**3 Sunshine.** Get out into the sun for a minimum of 20–30 minutes every day, preferably in the early morning or late afternoon. It does wonders for your wellbeing by boosting vitamin D levels and, accordingly, that vitamin's effect on your body, such as assistance in calcium metabolism and maintenance of the cardiovascular and immune systems.

**4 Exercise.** Get the body moving; life is movement. Find a sport or something you love doing and just do it. Bare minimum, you should be walking for 30–45 minutes almost every day.

**5 Wholefood.** What does "wholefood" mean? Complete. It means the food has not been cooked, hasn't been processed and hasn't had artificial sweeteners, colours and hydrogenated oil added to it. An apple is a wholefood. You can look at the food and know what it is. Wholefood is complete and has the nutrients your body needs. Eat as fresh as you can, as much as you can!

**6 Relationships.** I believe if you have been doing all the above, you will be satisfied and healthy. You will figure out how to process your relationships. Focus on your relationships and do what you can to improve them.

**7 Passion.** Have passion in your life and share that passion with other people. Get out there!

**8 Sleep.** Work on each of the above, one at a time, and finally do a little bit of meditation and get a good night's sleep — that's my number eight. Get at least eight hours a night to recharge your batteries.



Regularly sipping water is a reminder to stop and nourish the body and is the "ultimate in health and beauty" tonics.

while thinking thoughts such as, 'My body's intelligence is awesome. Every eating action and function is operating in perfection.'

### WHAT TO EAT

When viewing daily habits as an opportunity to care for yourself, what you choose to put in your mouth can mean the difference between self-nurturing and a ritual gone wrong.

Living wholefoods, grown organically, should be the top choice for anyone on a path to better health and self-care. Growing these yourself can bring depth to the ritual of eating: an understanding of what it takes to get from seed to salad, while putting time and energy into the care and maintenance of each plant — mindful actions that ultimately bring the food to the table.

According to Cynthia Louise, greens are the ultimate food of choice for you to create a ritual around.

"They bring on a wealth of beauty — beauty from the inside out," she says. "Greens are naturally beneficial and are high vibrational foods, meaning they grow up towards the sun. Greens will, 100 per cent, bring that glow into your skin and the whites of your eyes will be brighter than ever before."

Consuming two to three litres of green juice daily while eating salads as part of lunch and dinner is the "ultimate health and beauty ritual ever created", says Cynthia Louise. "Your friends will want your beauty ritual, along with the phone number and address of your therapist! You can happily send them to your local farmers' market."

### GET MOVING

In the computer age, sitting stationary has not only expanded our waistlines but seemingly torn us away from

## LET THE RIVER RUN

While the seven natural laws bring balance, what you eat and how you eat it play an integral part in your wellbeing or lack thereof. In the hustle and rush of modern living, however, most of us have forgotten the importance of growing, preparing and mindfully eating food — and regularly consuming clean water.

It's the latter — consuming good, clean water — that is the most important regular ritual anyone can adopt, says wholefood chef Cynthia Louise (chefcynthialouise.com). The co-author of the bestselling *Real Food Chef* cookbook series says that regularly sipping water is a reminder to stop and nourish the body and is the "ultimate in health and beauty" tonics.

"We are mostly made up of water. The more water we drink, the more things start to move and unfold in our bodies," she says. "It really is the ultimate care you can give to your body, your mind and, yes, even your soul."

## FINDING YOUR RITUAL IN FOOD

Cynthia Louise, who runs in-demand workshops across Australasia and Bali, regularly impresses the importance

of mindfulness at the dinner table — a self-nurturing practice that is a ritual everyone can, and should, adopt in order to properly nourish the body. It's also a reminder to stop and be in the moment and an opportunity to connect with family.

"I call it 'living in the let go' and 'getting grateful' and being mindful that more than half the world is starving," she says. "We in the West have an option to choose and that is genius ... I facilitate for humans how to sustain health and beauty long term and that starts from one simple rule: 24/7 quality control of our thoughts."

The wholefood chef says that eating on the run means you cannot be present and is an action that negatively affects your cells and your whole being.

"My teaching explores the participation in the present moment ... falling in love with food and its flavour, and creating a transformational relationship with our food and thoughts. Yes, food does matter and, more so, our thoughts matter. Where thoughts go, energy flows!

"When eating food, I recommend that you get grateful when chewing,



## BODY HEALTH & BEAUTY RITUALS

movement: one of the most life-sustaining habits.

Regular movement, whether through walking, yoga or simply jogging on the spot, is a soul-serving routine that aids the body to remove toxins, clears the mind and helps you feel better.

"Exercise is essential for stimulating your lymphatic system, which helps to eliminate excess waste products that would otherwise be eliminated through your skin," says naturopath and personal trainer Dina Savitz (dinasavitz.com). "Exercise also boosts circulation and keeps your digestive system healthy, both of which contribute to the health of your skin."

Savitz says exercising in the sun for at least 10 minutes daily without sunscreen is a great way to remind yourself to get out of the chair, while activating your body's natural vitamin D production.

If getting to a cardio class or joining a walking group calls for too much time out of your routine, Savitz says there are simple exercises that can be adopted which, if done regularly as part of a daily ritual, can help to create tone.

"You can start with a simple body-weight circuit with squats, push-ups, lunges, supermans and a plank," she says. "Complete 12 to 15 repetitions of each exercise, three times."

### EARTH ELEMENTS

While what you regularly put into your body can become important everyday habit, it's also what you put *onto* your body than can bring you into tune with nature and yourself.

Crystals are an ideal element to help form a personal ritual, from using them in meditation to placing high-vibrational crystal elixirs in bathwater. Through their resonance and energy exchange, crystals may bring the body, mind, soul and emotions back into a natural balanced state or vibration, says psychosomatic therapist and Reiki master Ellen Bendin (joya-australia.com.au).

"Besides wearing crystals on your body or in the form of jewellery, placing them in your home and office or using them to energise your drinking water, you can enjoy the benefits of a relaxing massage with crystals," she says.

"All crystals have different energies and vibrations and can support the body with different health issues. Rose quartz is said to give a beautiful and pleasant radiance while jade has been used in China for facials for thousands of years for its purifying effect on the skin."



Bendin says she starts her day with a three-minute dry body brushing ritual, using a brush with clear quartz. "Dry body brushing is an Ayurvedic technique that stimulates the lymphatic system and aids in effective detoxification and increased wellbeing. The invigorating body brushing boosts circulation, while

the exfoliation promotes glowing, tighter skin — all in three minutes a day. Just like brushing your teeth."

### 8 LIFE-AFFIRMING RITUALS

You don't need unlimited funds to create a more fulfilling, calmer daily experience. The following rituals may be all you need.

**1 Meditation.** Allowing 20 minutes of quiet time can improve decision-making, bring clarity and remind you not to get caught up in the "little things".

**2 Walking.** Taking strides on the beach (or even a treadmill) for 10–20 minutes daily encourages the body to eliminate toxins while helping you to de-stress.

**"Greens are naturally beneficial and are high vibrational foods, meaning they grow up towards the sun. Greens will, 100 per cent, bring that glow into your skin and the whites of your eyes will be brighter than ever before."**

### CHEF CYNTHIA LOUISE'S GREEN BOWL RECIPE

*Serves: 1*

Creating rituals in the kitchen benefits the whole family. This recipe is bursting with high-vibrational, organic wholefoods — great for a snack on the go or as a nourishing breakfast after a workout.

1 cup broccoli florets  
¼ zucchini, sliced into half rounds  
Big handful of spinach  
3 tbsp Udo's Oil  
Salt & pepper  
¼ cup apple cider vinegar  
¼ cup peas  
½ avocado  
1 cup shredded cabbage  
¼ cup parsley, roughly chopped  
1 cup living sprouts  
2 tbsp hemp seeds  
A few olives

Steam the broccoli and zucchini until just tender. Turn the heat off and add the spinach. Transfer to a bowl and toss with 2 tablespoons of the oil, seasoning well with salt and pepper.

Mix the remaining tablespoon of oil and vinegar together. Set aside in a small bowl ready to pour over your green bowl of goodness.

Add the rest of the ingredients, arranging them nicely on a large plate. Season well and enjoy.

**3 Eating mindfully.** With thoughts being energy, taking time to stop and practise gratitude can foster a peaceful state while helping the body to digest better.

**4 Journaling.** Just five minutes a day spent putting your thoughts on paper can produce "aha!" moments and allow you to work through problems more quickly. Keeping a journal can also be a powerful tool for manifesting.

**5 Dry body brushing.** Besides its lymph-cleansing and immune-boosting benefits, dry brushing before a morning shower can also be a reminder to appreciate your body. Send words of appreciation to each body part as you brush from your feet, working upward, always towards your heart.

**6 Switching off the television.** Picking up a self-help book or inspirational biography instead of the remote can help foster positive thoughts, relaxation and a sense of direction.

**7 Singing in the shower.** Whether you choose to chant an *om* or belt out Taylor Swift's latest hit, singing or chanting will take you out of thought mode and into the now. It's also a great way of letting your hair down while feeling the benefits of vibration.

**8 Finding a hobby.** All work and no play is a life unbalanced. Take an hour once a week to do something you've always wanted to do or know you love doing. It's there you may also get to connect with like-minded souls. 🌱

Shannon Dunn is a wellness writer and eco beauty editor. For more eco beauty news, sign up at [ecobeautyeditor.com/newsletter](http://ecobeautyeditor.com/newsletter).





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"Lucy", the house that Kiwi couple Shaye and Tom built.



# Little house on the rise

Statistics show we're building bigger homes than ever yet, at the other end of the scale, tiny houses are trending upwards — and they could be the answer to many environmental, health and social issues.

WORDS / MARTIN OLIVER

Both Australia and New Zealand have a tendency towards big houses — so much so, Australia now has the largest new houses in the world. Despite a downward trend in occupants, between 1984–5 and 2002–3 the floor area of new Australian houses rose by 40 per cent and has since increased further. In New Zealand, it grew by 73 per cent between 1976 and 2006.

A symptom of this oversized trend is the McMansion. Typically found on the urban fringe, these often ugly, large buildings are usually built to the edge of the lot, swallowing up the outdoor backyard space. There is no evidence that living in a large house makes people happy; in fact, the opposite may be true.

Large houses contribute to low urban density, sprawl, car dependence and corresponding health problems caused by lack of exercise. Environmentally, they require large inputs of materials and energy, put pressure on non-renewable resources such as oil and metal ores, and swallow up bushland and farmland.

Properties in Australia and NZ are some of the world's most unaffordable and the trend is worsening. Meanwhile, rents are becoming increasingly steep: many low-income households pay out at least 30 per cent of their income each week. Many younger people accept they've been priced out of the market and are resigned to either renting or living with their parents. Others are looking for out-of-the-box solutions that

contradict mainstream ideas about what housing should look like.

## TINY HOUSE OPTIONS

As house sizes blow out, at the other end of the scale a trend towards small housing is reflected in residences such as inner-city micro-apartments, granny flats, cabins and caravans. Shipping containers have become increasingly popular as the shells for alternative homes. But managing the toxic risks from treated wall paints and pesticide-coated floors can be expensive and not everybody likes living inside metal.

Recreational vehicles (RVs) and mobile homes are often associated with the growing "grey nomad" movement. However, new RVs have toxic problems





A stairway to the living room of one of two earth domes at Solscape Eco Retreat in Raglan, New Zealand.



A DIY tree house nestled in the heart of an old Kauri forest in New Zealand.

Photography Tumbleweed Tiny House Company



A Tumbleweed Tiny House Company home takes a trip.

Most of today's tiny houses are built on wheels using trailer frames, enabling them to be towed and relocated.

of their own, often emitting formaldehyde and styrene from their construction materials. Trailer parks have sprouted across the US but residents, generally from a lower socioeconomic stratum, are marked by social stigma.

Meanwhile, America is in the throes of a new, fast-growing tiny house movement that turns traditional assumptions about housing on their head. These ideas were stimulated by figures such as the architect Sarah Susanka, author of the 1997 book *The Not So Big House*, but earlier examples include early 20th century German allotment huts and shantytown housing in developing countries.

A tiny house can have a floor space of anything from around 5.6 to 60 square metres. Many have an elevated sleeping loft while others comprise two storeys. Wood is a popular building material and, unlike an RV, a tiny house is built to last.

Things kicked off in the late 1990s with the founding of the Tumbleweed Tiny House Company in Northern California. Back then, the company's diminutive residences appealed mostly to people interested in off-grid living. By the late 2000s, with the arrival of the global financial crisis, purchasers tended to buy them for economic reasons. Around

that time, tiny houses started to attract media attention and the movement has steadily attracted interest and enthusiasm since. Anecdotal evidence suggests the tiny house idea appeals more to single women than single men, although the reasons for this have not been thoroughly investigated.

Anybody interested in purchasing a tiny house from Tumbleweed will pay US\$57,000 and upwards (AU\$69,000/ NZ\$74,000), with a mortgage-style 15-year instalment payment option. A self-build from a set of plans is significantly cheaper and many DIY-ers have gone ahead despite no prior experience other than attending a construction workshop. Some houses have been made from salvaged materials, further cutting costs.

Most of today's tiny houses are built on wheels using trailer frames, enabling them to be towed and relocated. Where planning rules prohibit permanent structures, a tiny house on wheels is an ideal workaround. To many, this will conjure up romantic associations of ornate gypsy caravans and smallness of scale does offer greater scope for aesthetically pleasing attention to detail.

Typical locations where tiny houses are moved to or constructed include rural blocks of land, backyards (especially for young or elderly people

living with a family) and tiny house parks. With the right zoning permissions, one creative solution is urban infill. While official codes often ban tiny houses plus other alternative living structures such as yurts, many people go under the radar and action is generally taken only in the event of a complaint.

Fortunately, the authorities are slowly coming around to the idea that tiny houses are more a solution than a problem, and some communities are embracing them. In 2014, the town of Spur, near Lubbock in West Texas, with a population of a thousand, became America's first tiny-house-friendly community, allowing them to be built anywhere in town. Walsenburg in Colorado permits tiny houses in some zonings, as long as they are situated on foundations and connected to the mains. Among larger cities, Portland and Seattle have the most progressive policies, although tiny houses cannot be the primary housing unit on a lot.

In Australia and NZ, where the tiny house movement is very new, dozens of mobile dwellings have been built or are under construction. The NZ eco-business Biobuild is interested in moving into this embryonic sector and hands-on tiny-house-building workshops have recently started in Victoria.



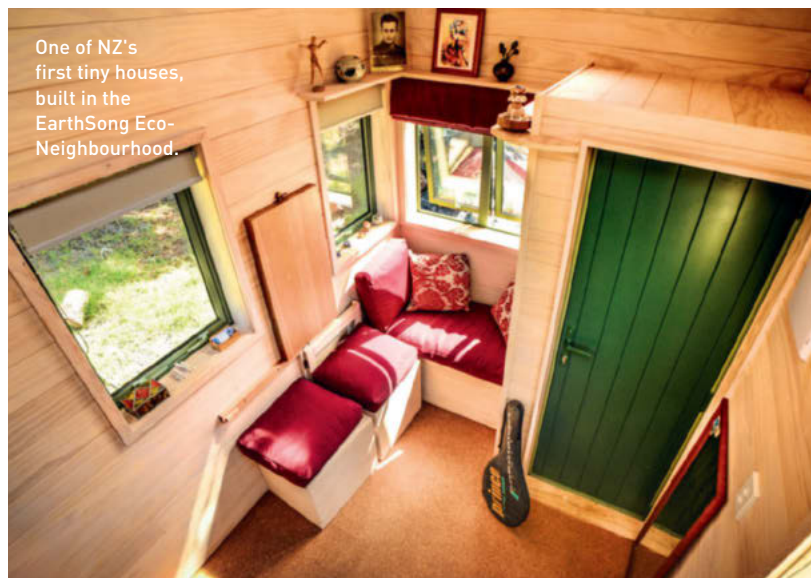


"The Linden", a ready-to-erect Tumbleweed Tiny House Company home.

Photography Tumbleweed Tiny House Company



Shaye and Tom's living room.



One of NZ's first tiny houses, built in the EarthSong Eco-Neighbourhood.

Because their size encourages residents to spend time outside, tiny-house dwellers are more likely to engage with, and contribute to, their surrounding community.

New Zealand pioneer Bryce Langston is enthusiastic and takes a refreshingly non-commercial attitude. After finishing his prototype tiny house, he intends to open-source plans free of charge online as a way to empower would-be builders.

To Langston, tiny houses represent a social revolution whereby young people who feel excluded from the housing market can aspire to home ownership. In his view, "The majority of people who build tiny houses are creating places that they will themselves live in and a lot more love, care and attention goes into their homes than those that developers build for someone else."

### A HOMELESSNESS SOLUTION

Many solutions have been pursued for the homeless but rarely has the idea of giving them homes been broached. In the US, provision of accommodation to this group is generally cheaper or the same cost as managing the problem with less effective Band-Aid solutions.

In the past year or so, a movement to create tiny house parks for homeless people has spread rapidly across the US, despite challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles and the NIMBY attitudes of nearby residents. These dwellings have mainly been built with volunteer labour, some from homeless people themselves.

In East Austin, Texas, the Community First! tiny house park offers micro-homes to this group for minimal rent. The project, which was instigated by the faith outreach service Mobile Loaves and Fishes, features a community garden, beehives, chickens and a tool library. When completed, it will have at least 200 dwellings. Several other smaller initiatives are underway in Newfield (New York State), Olympia (Washington), Portland (Oregon) and Madison (Wisconsin).

### COUNTING THE BENEFITS (& COSTS)

Many people report feeling happier in tiny houses and live in them by choice. Empty-nesters frequently find their houses too large for their needs and feel drawn to something smaller. In contrast to today's large, anonymous indoor spaces, a tiny house is cosy and homely and, like being in a tent, it can feel pleasantly compact and self-contained.

Avoiding expensive mortgages, high rents and pricey repairs gives a tiny house occupant the economic freedom to pursue their life's passions rather than feel as if they're running on a hamster wheel.

The urge to simplify one's life is a strong motivating factor, especially

given that possessions tend to rob home-dwellers of precious time. Living in a tiny house is a powerful lesson in deciding which items are really needed, as all non-essential clutter will have to be relinquished. Time-draining housework is kept to a minimum as there is very little cleaning to be done.


It also means transcending consumerism, as there's no point buying something if there's nowhere to keep it. Time that would otherwise be devoted to shopping can instead be directed towards more creative and fulfilling pursuits.

Because their size encourages residents to spend time outside, tiny-house dwellers are more likely to engage with, and contribute to, their surrounding community. This reverses the modern trend towards spending increasing amounts of time indoors and being more insular within one's own private bubble.

In a family situation, younger children typically take to tiny houses like ducks to water, treating them like a play-space such as a treehouse or fort. A lack of indoor space also encourages them to go out and exercise instead of being glued to a screen. For all families with children, the issues of noise and privacy have to be planned in advance.

Photography Melissa Nickerson, livingbigintinyhouse.com





A tiny house on a trailer allows you to take your home with you when you travel!

Photography Tumbleweed Tiny House Company

## WATER & ENERGY SYSTEMS

A tiny house is a step towards becoming more self-sufficient while lowering one's environmental impact. However, the practicalities of life that people take for granted in a regular-sized house need to be thought through.

Where water isn't being fed into a house via the mains, the easiest and healthiest solution seems to be an indoor storage tank made of steel and designed for top-ups via a garden hose.

For greywater not connected to the sewer, the best environmental disposal option is to feed it onto a garden area without edible ground-level plants. Keeping everything that goes down the sink biodegradable will avoid damaging the soil. The second-best option is to construct a soakaway in the ground.

Where there is no flush toilet setup, a composting toilet is a good option, ideally one that separates the different wastes and that dries out the solids that can later be used as compost.

Laundry can be the biggest headache. Ideas include washer-dryer combination units and portable hand-crank washing machines that have the downside of being unsuitable in cold weather without a dryer. A communal laundry is good for a village setup, or you could just cop out entirely by employing a laundry service.

If you're off the grid, as many appliances as possible (fridge, cooker and hot water) will need to run on gas. Electricity is best supplied by a 12-volt battery running off solar, but this will limit power use to a few small items. For heating and cooling, good insulation is a key factor. Vented gas heaters are most popular, although some choose wood for heating. Shading via overhead vegetation, awnings and screens is ideal for summer cooling.

## THE DOWNSIDES

Having a tiny house also has its drawbacks. Towing can be a pain when faced with windy roads, steep hills, low overhead bridges or overhanging branches. It also requires a vehicle such as a 4WD with a fair bit of grunt that will probably use more fuel than a sedan. As a result, mobile tiny house owners often prefer staying put to travelling.

Some comments online unkindly suggest that tiny-housers are responding to economic oppression by living in a shoebox. However, this ignores the fact that nearly every tiny house resident is making a choice to enhance their quality of life.

In densely built-up urban areas, a major trend towards tiny houses could leave the inhabitants feeling they are

living in a beehive rather than a city. Most urban construction of tiny houses has so far occurred in Europe and Japan, parts of which, probably not coincidentally, are among the world's most densely populated regions. If the tiny house movement were to position itself as a solution to overpopulation, it may have a PR problem on its hands.

Despite the limited drawbacks, tiny houses have struck a chord in a section of the population where people remain interested in downshifting, in sloughing off unnecessary baggage and in finding their life's purpose. 🍷

## RESOURCES

**Tiny Houses Australia**

[tinyhousesaustralia.com](http://tinyhousesaustralia.com)

**Living Big in a Tiny House (NZ)**

[livingbiginatinyhouse.com](http://livingbiginatinyhouse.com)

**Tumbleweed Tiny House Company**

[tumbleweedhouses.com](http://tumbleweedhouses.com)

**The Tiny Life** [thetinylife.com](http://thetinylife.com)

**TinyHouseBuild.com**

[tinyhousebuild.com](http://tinyhousebuild.com)

**Tiny House Giant Journey**

[tinyhousegiantjourney.com](http://tinyhousegiantjourney.com)

**The Not So Big House**

[notsobighouse.com](http://notsobighouse.com)

*Martin Oliver is a writer and researcher based in Lismore, northern NSW, Australia.*



# FARMING *for the future*



Agriculture may be what feeds us but industrial farming methods are threatening our planet. How can farmers produce enough food to feed a swelling population in a way that benefits the Earth, themselves and their communities, and anyone who eats? Solutions exist — we just need to embrace them.

WORDS / DANIELLE KIRK





**F**ood. It's a glorious, elemental thing that sustains our bodies and nourishes our souls. We take it for granted in this lucky country that food will always be there when we want it: on our supermarket shelves, in our market stalls and, occasionally, in our backyards or growing up our balcony walls.

Yet will this be the case in the future?

Agriculture is what keeps food in the pantry and your stomach full — but it's also threatening the planet. It's one of the main contributors to global warming, with greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture reaching the highest level in history in 2011, according to a 2014 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report. These emissions are due largely to methane produced by livestock and rice farms, nitrous oxide from the use of synthetic fertilisers and carbon dioxide from the clearing of forests to raise livestock or grow crops. Without greater efforts to reduce them, they are projected to grow by 30 per cent by 2050.

Farming uses about 70 per cent of the world's water (in Australia, agriculture accounted for 65 per cent of water consumed in 2012–13) and is a major polluter, too, with fertiliser and manure runoff disrupting lakes, river systems and coastal ecosystems worldwide. Clearing land for agriculture is also a leading cause of wildlife extinction around the globe. In our oceans, the most recent FAO figures show that 85 per cent of the world's fish stocks are fished to full capacity, or are overfished.

Globally, we're likely to have 2 billion more mouths to feed by 2050 as the population grows to over 9 billion. The broader distribution of wealth, notably in China and India, is leading to higher demand for animal protein, which is putting pressure on farmers to grow more grains to feed pigs, chickens and cattle and to farm these animals more intensively. If these trends continue, farmers worldwide will have to produce 75 per cent more cereal grains and close to double the amount of meat by 2050.

All of the above is putting pressure on food availability and price as well as consuming non-renewable fossil fuels, and the deteriorating quality of food produced is affecting peoples' health and wellbeing.

Against this bleak backdrop, Aussie farmers are working hard to keep you fed. Most care deeply for the food they produce and the land they own; it's their livelihood and their home, after all. And they're bearing the brunt of climate

change, declining stocks of water and arable land, degraded soils, shrinking profit margins courtesy of powerful players in the food-supply chain and consumer demand for ever-lower prices.

Some farmers have buckled under the pressure and left their farms or, at worst, committed suicide. For those that remain, what does their farming future look like? What will it mean for the future of the environment? And what can you do to ensure you and your children can eat high-quality food for years to come?

## THE STATE OF THE FARMING NATION

Historically, agriculture has been Australia's cultural backbone and a big money-spinner. Yet the size and importance of the industry relative to the rest of the economy has been steadily declining, even while agricultural outputs and exports have risen dramatically.

Agricultural output more than doubled over the four decades to 2004 and, in 2012–2013, farmers produced AU\$48 billion worth of goods — 3 per cent of GDP. This increase in production is a global phenomenon that, according to the independent multi-stakeholder, multidisciplinary 2008 UN report *International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development* (IAASTD), has been achieved largely through industrial methods: increasing yields with "improved germplasm (genetic material), and increased inputs (water, agrochemicals) and mechanisation".

Two-thirds of Australia's landmass is dedicated to agriculture and 90 per cent of that is for grazing on native pastures. In 2012, the highest value of production, in order, was cattle, wheat, dairy, vegetables, fruit and nuts, lamb meat and wool, but most farmers produce both wheat and sheep.

Meanwhile, agricultural exports have been growing by about 5 per cent annually since 1980. In 2009, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, producers exported 60 per cent of all food, mainly to Asian countries. Recently signed free-trade agreements with China, Japan and South Korea are set to make overseas trade even easier, and negotiations are underway with major food-importing partners such as Indonesia and India.

Agriculture represents just a small drop in the GDP ocean yet, from a purely financial perspective, its future looks rosy: Australia will profit from feeding the world. But this fails to account for

other factors: farmers' terms of trade (the ratio of prices received to prices paid) has been steadily declining; variations in seasonal conditions are becoming more volatile; water is becoming scarce; and arable land is being lost through urban sprawl, open-cut mining and land degradation.

Also, production is becoming increasingly concentrated in large operations. Over the past 30 years, big players such as the Australian Agricultural Company and Singapore-based Olam International have been steadily buying up land from smaller farmers who're are selling because of:

- Increasing age (the median age of Aussie farmers is 53) and children who, rather than take over the farm, have chosen to work in mines or cities
- Severe droughts, floods and fires
- Insurmountable debt thanks to back-to-back bad seasons
- Big-figure offers
- Disillusionment and despair

Robert Pekin, a food sovereignty advocate and founder of food-box scheme Food Connect, was forced off his family dairy farm in Victoria in 1998 due to drought and extremely low milk prices following the deregulation of the state's dairy industry. He says consolidation is challenging. "Farmers either have to walk off the land or become employees, which isn't a good experience for people who're used to being quite self-determinant about their future, and looking after their farm and the landscape."

According to the ABS, 40 per cent of farmers left the land between 1981 and 2011 and, in the five years to 2011, 19,700 farms ceased to exist in Australia — a fall of 11 per cent. Among the estimated 135,000 farm businesses that remain, small farmers increasingly compete against larger operations that eventually buy more land for economies of scale, pricing prospective farmers out of the property market.

As independent farmers do it tough, fewer dollars are spent in regional towns and more young people move to cities, leaving an ageing population and struggling local businesses behind.

It's a vicious cycle.

## FARMING INTO THE FUTURE

So how can we best farm — and thus eat — into the future? There are two main schools of thought. Those who favour industrial agriculture talk of how further research and development (R&D) by scientists can boost food output to



keep pace with growing domestic and overseas markets. Proponents of local, organic farms argue that small farmers can raise yields — and protect their livelihoods and the Earth — by adopting techniques that improve soil fertility without chemical inputs.

But there's a third way: a farming future that unites innovation and traditional agricultural practices. It's an idea that's gaining traction across the conventional-organic spectrum and, increasingly, we're seeing solutions arise that are changing how farmers farm, what food they grow and how they get it to our plates.

While this article focuses on farming in Australia, the below principles can be applied to New Zealand and around the world. It can't hope to cover all areas of agriculture or all innovations; it does, however, highlight some cause for optimism.

### HOW WILL FUTURE FARMERS GROW YOUR FOOD?

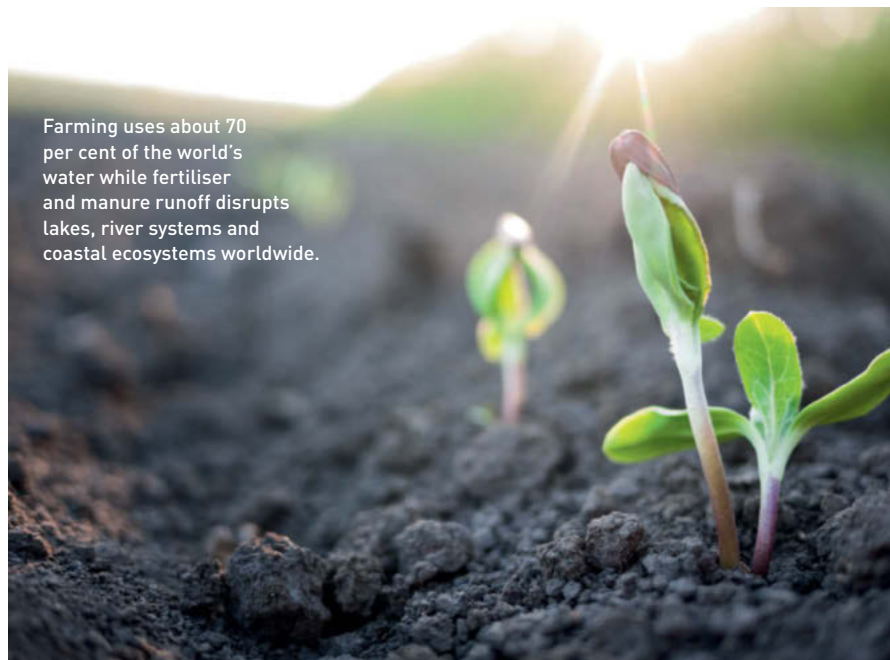
Conventional agriculture typically focuses on simplifying systems to maximise production of a single food, generally ignoring the local ecosystem. Chemical-intensive monoculture has obtained high yields while degrading soils to the point where more and more fossil-fuel- and water-intensive energy, fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides need to be applied to maintain current output, leading in turn to increased GHG emissions and chemical-laden foods that have almost half the mineral density they did 60 years ago.

According to two recent studies published in the journals *Science* and *Anthropocene Review*, the amount of fertiliser used globally is now eight times higher than it was in the 1950s. Researchers found that, of nine worldwide processes that underpin life on Earth, the high level of phosphorus and nitrogen flowing into the oceans due to fertiliser use is one of four processes that have exceeded "safe" levels; the others are human-driven climate change, loss of biosphere integrity and land system change.

Here are some ways positive change can happen.

#### Adopt agroecological systems

New agriculture systems are needed and "agroecology" seems to be a winner. Agroecology seeks to apply ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable food systems, farming



Farming uses about 70 per cent of the world's water while fertiliser and manure runoff disrupts lakes, river systems and coastal ecosystems worldwide.

in a way that overcomes the need for synthetic fertilisers and chemicals. It encompasses organic, biodynamic and biological farming systems.

One of agroecology's major benefits is it helps to replenish lost stores of carbon in the soil. According to farming systems agronomist Dr Maarten Stapper, the harsh synthetics used in current farming methods ignore the delicate balance of microbes, humus, trace minerals and nutrients in the soil. "A healthy system is based on healthy soils, but our farming methods have degraded soils by 20–80 per cent across the world," he says.

"We need to *improve* the amount of carbon in the soil. Agroecological farming puts carbon dioxide back into the soil as plants capture the CO<sub>2</sub> and transmute part of it to soil organic carbon through the stimulation of soil microbes — life in the soil — and earthworms become active and create castings, which are mainly carbon. We can double our carbon in the soil in two to three years. It's absolutely amazing to see that happening."

Dr Stapper says many farmers in Australia and worldwide are switching to agroecology after personal experiences. "They see the landscape going backwards. Some people have problems with health and they change their farming to use less chemicals. Lots of negatives lead individual farmers to create big change."

Yet, adoption rates for agroecological methods are still low, he cautions. There are few advisory services to guide farmers, few R&D dollars have been devoted to agroecological methods and, equally, successful agroecological

farmers need a "green thumb": an intuitive sense of what's good for soil, plants and animals.

An easily adopted option is biological agriculture, a practice that's emerging in the US and helps farmers move profitably, gradually towards organic farming. Dr Stapper says farmers incrementally create healthy soils using biological inputs while still using, but minimising, "synthetic inputs that work against biology and balance". Costs decrease over time, yield remains high, soil — and food — quality increases and profitability is enhanced as conventional farmers avoid the unprofitable transition phase of converting to certified organic.

Says Dr Stapper, "Biological farming merges the principles and best practices of organic farming and modern farming to make the best path of food production for the future."

#### Take an ecosystems-based approach

While they may not yet use agroecological methods, mainstream agronomists are focusing increasingly on soil integrity and the amount of organic materials retained in the soil. Many farmers, too, are embracing approaches that look after the soil and conserve natural resources, supported by schemes such as Landcare and the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund, which helps land managers "store carbon, enhance biodiversity and build greater environmental resilience across the Australian landscape".

Holistic management is an ecosystems-based land management technique that's becoming widely known, and implemented. Devised





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by Zimbabwean biologist and farmer Allan Savory, it helps graziers manage herds of livestock in a way that mimics large herds of wild herbivores, and thus heal the land. It provides a framework for adapting to four basic ecosystem processes: the water cycle, the mineral cycle including the carbon cycle, energy flow and the relationship between organisms in an ecosystem.

By intensively managing the behaviour and movement of livestock, holistic planned grazing simultaneously increases stocking rates and restores grazing land.

Other approaches that work to develop paddocks within a sustainable landscape — developed by Australians — include permaculture, Yeomans' Keyline Design and Natural Sequence Farming.

### Grow more on the farms we've got

To be productive in the future, we'll need to replenish degraded soils on existing farms and boost yields on less productive farmlands. One way to do this is via high-tech farming systems that minimise inputs, such as combining agroecology with computerised tractors equipped with sensors and GPS to better target fertiliser and pesticide applications.

An innovator in this area is Colin Seis, a fourth-generation farmer on Winona, a property in the NSW Central Highlands. He has pioneered pasture cropping, whereby you sow food, like wheat, oats and barley — which is pasture cropped into grassland during winter when the grass is dormant — without ploughing or killing the grassland with chemicals first, as happens in conventional farming. The method also involves crop rotation, using grazing animals to prepare the field and sowing using a no-till drill. Seis has reduced his fertiliser use by 70 per cent over time and today only uses organic fertiliser at very low rates.

According to Seis, it results in better-quality soil and better-quality food. Research shows that soil quality has improved dramatically at Winona, with a 203 per cent increase in soil carbon, 200 per cent increase in water-holding capacity and 163 per cent increase in all soil nutrients, which boosts vitamins and minerals in the foods grown. Crop yields remain the same as with conventional farming, but costs are significantly lower due to low-to-no fertiliser use and no use of pest- or weed-control chemicals. "Also, pasture cropping restores grasslands and perennial pasture, so more stock feed is produced and ecosystems can be restored," says Seis.

Another benefit of pasture cropping is it harnesses what farmers call "vertical stacking": multiple enterprises on a farm that complement each other. On Winona, Seis grazes merino sheep, runs a kelpie stud, grows food crops and harvests grass seed for his own use and for sale.

Seis was named Landcare Farmer of the Year in 2014 and educates Australian and international farmers about his methods. He is now developing another, even more regenerative technique: multi-species pasture cropping.

### Reinvent traditional farming methods

Anne McGrath and Nick Weber own Majura Valley Free Range Eggs, a mixed grazing and haymaking property in the ACT. The couple and their young family run free-ranging chickens according to the principles of US agriculturalist Joel Salatin, named the world's most innovative farmer by *Time* magazine.

"It's essentially permaculture where large animals (sheep) graze first and the chooks go afterwards in mobile enclosures, putting fertiliser back

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**To be productive in the future, we'll need to replenish degraded soils on existing farms and increase yields on less productive farmlands. One way to do this is through high-tech farming systems that minimise inputs.**

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onto the paddock," says Weber. The livestock prune the grass, stimulating further growth, and directly fertilise the soil; the chickens help to decompose the cow dung and remove pathogens from it, fertilise the soil — and produce nutrient-dense free-range eggs.

"You get greatly enhanced nutrients in the soil and, over time, you increase its value and yield, so the grass is much richer for the sheep," says Weber. "It's only what our grandparents were doing, but now it's a new thing. And it means you don't have to buy chemicals. It's time-intensive but you're able to better care for the animals and the animals can in turn exhibit their natural behaviours."

According to the IAASTD report, it'll be key for public and private institutions to engage with small-scale farmers, like McGrath and Weber, who are using resources efficiently, conserving

natural resources and biodiversity and getting high yields. The underlying principles, process and knowledge can potentially be extrapolated to larger-scale farming systems.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Farming is undeniably at a crossroads and sustainability has become a focus of the whole industry. At present, commonly accepted sustainable interventions are land regeneration practices and don't yet extend to pasture-cropping or organic fertilisers.

Farmers are slowly starting to view such "greenie" practices with new eyes, though, as word of their effectiveness spreads. Some agricultural scientists, too, realise that amped-up conventional farming isn't sustainable into the future. However, those we spoke to agree it will take time for most attitudes to change — and perhaps a painful shock.

How can you help speed up the shift to more sustainable, more ecological — and, yes, more productive — farming?

■ Lobby for all levels of government to work with stakeholders to create public policies, regulatory frameworks and international agreements that encourage more ecological farming practices.

■ Ask your local council to educate farmers in agroecological practices and take the lead in managing community ecosystems.

■ Farmers: research innovative practices, give them a shot — and share them with your neighbours.

■ Anyone who eats food: vote with your dollar for more locally produced, seasonal, high-quality food that's grown in an ecological way. And ask for it at your supermarket. As Dr Maarten Stapper says, "It's the consumer that's in charge of the whole system."

Next issue, we'll be looking at the future of food: what foods farmers will be growing and how the food system could be reinvented to create a more equitable, ethical and healthy future for farmers, the planet and you. 🌱

### RESOURCES

■ **Dr Maarten Stapper**, [drmaartenstapper.com.au](http://drmaartenstapper.com.au)

■ **Colin Seis**, [pasturecropping.com](http://pasturecropping.com)

■ **The Savory Institute (holistic management)**, [savoryinstitute.com](http://savoryinstitute.com)

■ **Majura Valley Free Range Eggs**, [facebook.com/mveggs](https://facebook.com/mveggs)

■ **Landcare Australia**, [landcareonline.com.au](http://landcareonline.com.au)

*Danielle Kirk is the editor of WellBeing and misses living in the bush.*





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To eat grains or to not eat grains? I am proudly and staunchly in the grain-free camp. From a Paleo lifestyle perspective, the hunter-gatherer diet of our ancestors, on which they subsisted for over 2.5 million years, is far more deeply and indelibly imprinted into our DNA than our agricultural habits of the past few thousand years. So it's no surprise that our modern-day dependence on grains is having an impact because our bodies (and brains) are ill-equipped to cope.

### THE ARGUMENT AGAINST

Research is now revealing that overconsumption of grains may be one of the key drivers behind the explosion of chronic modern-day illnesses such as type-2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. So many causes of these diseases are being traced back to the contents of many grains, especially those that have a protein called gluten, which is responsible for wide-reaching allergy and sensitivity issues.

Grains and legumes typically contain very high levels of phytic acid, which can bind to minerals such as calcium, iron, magnesium and zinc and take them out of the body. That means heavy grain consumption can lead to deficiencies in key minerals. Overconsumption of carbohydrates from a grain-based diet can also deplete stores of serotonin and B vitamins. Grains are also among the many foods that contain goitrogens, which are thyroid-inhibiting substances.

By far the worst culprit when it comes to consuming grains is gluten. Gluten comes from the Latin word for glue and is found in many grains, including wheat (this includes durum, semolina, spelt and kamut), rye and barley. It's made up of two proteins, gliadin and glutenin, and these comprise at least 80 per cent of the protein content in most grains. Gluten is what gives bread and baked goods their elasticity and fluffiness.

Unfortunately, overconsumption of gluten can cause rampant and prolonged inflammation. This inflammation is responsible for the development and onset of a range of chronic illnesses, from diabetes to osteoporosis to cardiovascular disease, and is a key contributor to our soaring obesity rates.

Gluten can also have a detrimental effect on brain health. For those who are gluten sensitive, the blood flow to the frontal and prefrontal cortex actually shuts down after it is consumed. This impacts on your ability

# GOING GRAIN-FREE

Although our modern diet is heavily dependent on grains, there's a world of healthy, delicious alternatives for your table.

WORDS / PETE EVANS



to focus, manage emotional states and plan and organise, as well as how your short-term memory functions.

That's why, at its heart, living a Paleo lifestyle is about embracing a grain-free existence through finding new and fun ways to get creative in the kitchen. I've been a chef for over 25 years but never have I been on such an awesome and delicious food adventure as the one I'm walking now; and being grain-free is expanding my horizons bigtime!

### POSITIVE CHOICES

By choosing to make organic vegies, quality animal-protein sources from land and sea, low-sugar fruits, nuts and some seeds the stars of my culinary

creations, I am able to create a whole lot of nutritious, delicious recipes that I hope will not only make you feel well but also give you the courage to shake things up with what you serve on the dinner table.

Some of the vegies that are the best for your body are cruciferous stars like broccoli and cauliflower. As soon as I ditched rice, I started to make these nutritional powerhouses into delicious alternatives by grating, pulsing and then lightly boiling them (five minutes is enough).

They make a fantastic side dish with a tasty curry and can also be the main stars of the show. I know for my girls, Indii and Chilli, one of their all-time fave





Paleo BLT.

feels more sprightly than ever since doing this. Love you, Mum! She reckons her favourite bolognaise sauce tastes even better smothered over zucchini spaghetti and is stoked that it doesn't make her stomach feel heavy at the end of the meal. I'm excited about the stories people are sharing with me all over Australia regarding their phenomenal success both in and out of the kitchen.

Don't get boxed in or think too hard about it all. Just cook with love, follow your heart, choose great local, seasonal ingredients and you can't go wrong. Our food is our medicine and, by creating a movement together, we can change the future for our children and their children. Now doesn't that make it worth forgoing the bread basket?

Cook with love and laughter,  
Pete

## PALEO BLT

*Serves: 4*

8 slices egg bread (see recipe)  
1 tbsp coconut oil  
4 rashers bacon  
4 tbsp aioli (see recipe)  
8 baby cos lettuce leaves  
2 vine-ripened tomatoes, sliced  
2 tbsp tomato relish (see recipe)  
Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper

Toast the bread slices in a toaster until light golden-brown. Alternatively, toast in the oven at 200°C for 5–8 minutes (check after 4 minutes) or until pale golden.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan over medium–high heat, add the bacon and fry for 2 minutes on each side until golden and crispy.

Spread about a tablespoon of aioli on one side of the toasted egg bread slices, then top four slices with the lettuce, tomato, bacon and tomato relish. Season with salt and pepper and place the remaining toast slices, aioli side down, on top. Cut the sandwiches in half and devour.

## TOMATO RELISH

1 tbsp macadamia oil  
1 onion, chopped  
1 tbsp yellow mustard seeds  
3 garlic cloves, chopped  
1 long red chilli, chopped  
1 tbsp grated ginger  
1 tbsp ground turmeric  
6 vine-ripened tomatoes, diced  
2½ tbsp red wine vinegar  
1½ tbsp honey (optional)

Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat, add the onion and cook for a few

minutes or until lightly browned. Add the mustard seeds, garlic, chilli, ginger and turmeric and cook for 1 minute or until fragrant and the mustard seeds start to pop. Add the tomato and cook for 5 minutes or until softened. Add the red wine vinegar and honey (if using) and cook, stirring regularly, for about 10–15 minutes or until the liquid has reduced by half. Season with salt and pepper and cool.

**Note:** Leftover tomato relish can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2 months.

## AIOLI

4 roasted garlic cloves  
4 free-range organic egg yolks  
2 tsp Dijon mustard  
2 tsp apple cider vinegar  
2 tbsp lemon juice  
400mL extra-virgin olive oil (add extra if needed)  
Salt & freshly ground black pepper

Place the garlic, egg yolks, mustard, vinegar and lemon juice in a food processor and process until combined. With the motor running, slowly pour in the extra-virgin olive oil in a thin stream and process until the aioli is thick and creamy, adding extra oil if needed. Season with salt and pepper.

**Note:** Leftover aioli can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for 4–5 days.

## EGG BREAD

*Serves: 6 (1 loaf)*

*Prep time: 10 mins*

*Cooking time: 45 mins*

185g coconut oil, melted  
15 free-range organic eggs  
120g almond meal  
30g flaxmeal  
30g arrowroot  
1 tbsp baking powder  
1 tsp garlic powder  
1 tbsp tahini  
1 tsp maca powder (optional)  
1 tsp good-quality salt  
Macadamia cheese, to serve (see recipe)

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease a 22×12cm loaf tin with oil and line the base and sides with baking paper.

In a large bowl, combine the almond meal, baking powder, arrowroot, flaxseed meal, garlic powder and salt and set aside.

Combine the coconut oil, tahini and 8 eggs in the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat on high for 3–4 minutes until light and fluffy. Add the remaining eggs one at a time and continue beating until the mix is aerated and fluffy.

mid-week meals is cauliflower fried rice with bacon. And the best bit of all? It only takes a few minutes to prepare.

There are so many fantastically flavoursome ingredients we can use instead of slavishly living off the breads, cereals and pastas that we've been told to eat for years.

Just think of your vegies as your stars and your nuts as the (sugar-free) icing on the cake, so to speak. Once you start getting creative in the kitchen, it's incredible how many delicious dishes you can start creating.

My mum Joy, for example, threw out all the pasta in her house when she realised she could use thin slices of zucchini in its place and she says she



Fold the egg mixture into the dry ingredients one-third at a time, and mix until well combined.

Transfer the bread mixture into the lined loaf tin and bake for 30–45 minutes, or until slightly browned and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove the loaf from the tin and cool on a cooling rack.

Serve lightly toasted and smeared with macadamia cheese.

**Note:** You can store this bread in the refrigerator for up to 5 days or in the freezer for 3 months.

## MACADAMIA CHEESE

*Makes: 600g*

*Prep time: 5 mins (plus 7–12 hours soaking time)*

320g raw macadamias

4 tsp lemon juice

1 tsp sea salt

Pinch freshly ground black pepper

Soak the macadamias in 750mL water for at least 7 hours (overnight is best). Drain the water and rinse the nuts thoroughly under warm water.

Place the macadamias in a food processor and add the lemon juice, salt and pepper, then pulse for one minute to combine. Add 240mL of water and continue to process until the texture is smooth. If the macadamia cheese seems overly thick or



dry, gradually add more water and lemon juice to adjust the consistency.

**Note:** The macadamia cheese can be stored refrigerated for up to one week.

### Variations

Cashews can be used in place of macadamias. Simply soak the nuts for at least 2–4 hours and halve the added water. You can also add flavours using one teaspoon of truffle oil or chilli oil.

## NIC'S PALEO LOAF

*Serves: 6 (1 loaf)*

*Prep time: 10 mins*

*Cooking time: 80 mins*

100g almond meal, sifted

50g coconut flour, sifted

4 tbsp psyllium seed powder

2 tsp gluten-free baking powder

1 tbsp raw apple cider vinegar

8 free-range organic eggs, beaten until fluffy

4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

A few good pinches of sea salt or

Himalayan salt

Preheat the oven to 120°C. Grease a 20×10cm loaf tin and line the base and sides with baking paper.

Combine all the dry ingredients, add the beaten egg, apple cider vinegar and olive oil, then stir well to combine.

Scoop the mixture into the bread tin and spread out evenly to all four corners. Bake for 80 minutes, remove, allow to cool a little, slice and then eat with whatever tickles your fancy. We love it dipped into olive oil, coconut aminos and homemade dukkah!

## TUNA & AVOCADO SUSHI ROLLS

*Serves: 4–6*

*Prep time: 35 mins*

400g cauliflower rice (see recipe)

2 tbsp tahini

3 tbsp cashew or macadamia nut butter

Sea salt

1 150g tin good-quality tuna in olive oil or brine, drained

2 tbsp mayonnaise, plus extra to serve

2 pinches chilli powder (optional)

4 toasted nori sheets

1 large handful rocket leaves

1 cucumber, sliced lengthways into eighths & seeds removed

½ carrot, sliced into thin batons

½ avocado, sliced into strips

Toasted white & black sesame seeds, to serve

Tamari, to serve

Wasabi, to serve

Combine the cauliflower rice, tahini and cashew or macadamia nut butter in a bowl.





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Season with sea salt and mix together well.

In another bowl, mix the tuna, mayonnaise and chilli powder (if using).

Place a nori sheet on a bench or on a bamboo sushi mat. Spread one-quarter of the cauliflower rice mix onto half of the nori sheet, working from the edge closest to you and spreading it out to the sides. Layer the tuna, rocket, cucumber, carrot and avocado across the middle of the cauliflower rice. Starting with the edge closest to you, begin to tightly wrap the roll all the way to the end. Trim the ends with a sharp knife, then cut into 2cm round pieces. Repeat with the remaining nori, cauliflower rice and fillings.

You can also make these into hand rolls. Simply cut the nori sheets in halves, forming 10x18cm pieces. Place a nori piece in the palm of your hand, shiny side down, and top with some of the rice mixture, followed by the tuna, rocket, cucumber,



Tuna & Avocado Sushi Rolls.

carrot and avocado. Fold the bottom corner of the nori over the filling, then roll it up to form a cone shape.

Place the sushi pieces on a platter and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serve with mayonnaise, tamari and wasabi.

### CAULIFLOWER RICE

*Serves: 4-6*

*Prep time: 5 mins*

*Cooking time: 6 mins*

1 cauliflower, florets & stalk roughly chopped  
2 tbsp coconut oil



Cauliflower Fried Rice.

Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper  
Place the cauliflower in a food processor and pulse into tiny, fine pieces that look like rice.

Place the coconut oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the cauliflower and lightly cook for 4-6 minutes, or until softened. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

### CAULIFLOWER FRIED RICE

*Serves: 4-6*

*Prep time: 30 mins*

*Cooking time: 10 mins*

1 head cauliflower (about 1kg), separated into florets  
4 slices bacon or ham, diced  
4 free-range organic eggs, whisked  
2 tbsp coconut oil  
1 onion, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
200g small raw prawns, shelled & deveined  
100g shiitake or oyster mushrooms, sliced  
2.5cm piece ginger, finely grated  
100g okra, sliced  
100g Brussels sprouts, sliced  
2 tbsp tamari  
50g bean sprouts  
2 spring onions, finely sliced  
2 tbsp chopped coriander leaves

2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves  
1 tbsp chopped mint leaves  
1-2 long red chillies, sliced  
Sea salt & freshly ground white pepper  
Cultured kimchi, to serve  
Fish sauce, to serve

Pulse the cauliflower in a food processor until it resembles grains of rice.

In a large frying pan or wok, fry the bacon over high heat until crispy. Remove and set aside. Pour the eggs into the pan and tilt the pan so the egg covers the base. Cook for a few minutes or until the egg is set. Remove, slice into thin strips and set aside.

Heat the coconut oil in the pan over high heat, add the onion and garlic and cook for a few minutes, or until softened. Stir in the prawns, mushrooms and ginger and cook for another few minutes. Add the okra and Brussels sprouts and cook for 1 minute. Add the cauliflower and cook for 2-3 minutes, or until tender. Add the bacon, egg, tamari, sprouts, spring onion, herbs, chilli and some salt and pepper and cook for 2 minutes, or until everything is heated through and well combined.

Serve your fried cauliflower rice with kimchi and a splash of fish sauce. 🍣

*Pete Evans is a chef, Paleo ambassador, health coach, restaurateur, media personality and author of his new book Family Food. W: [peteevans.com.au](http://peteevans.com.au)*

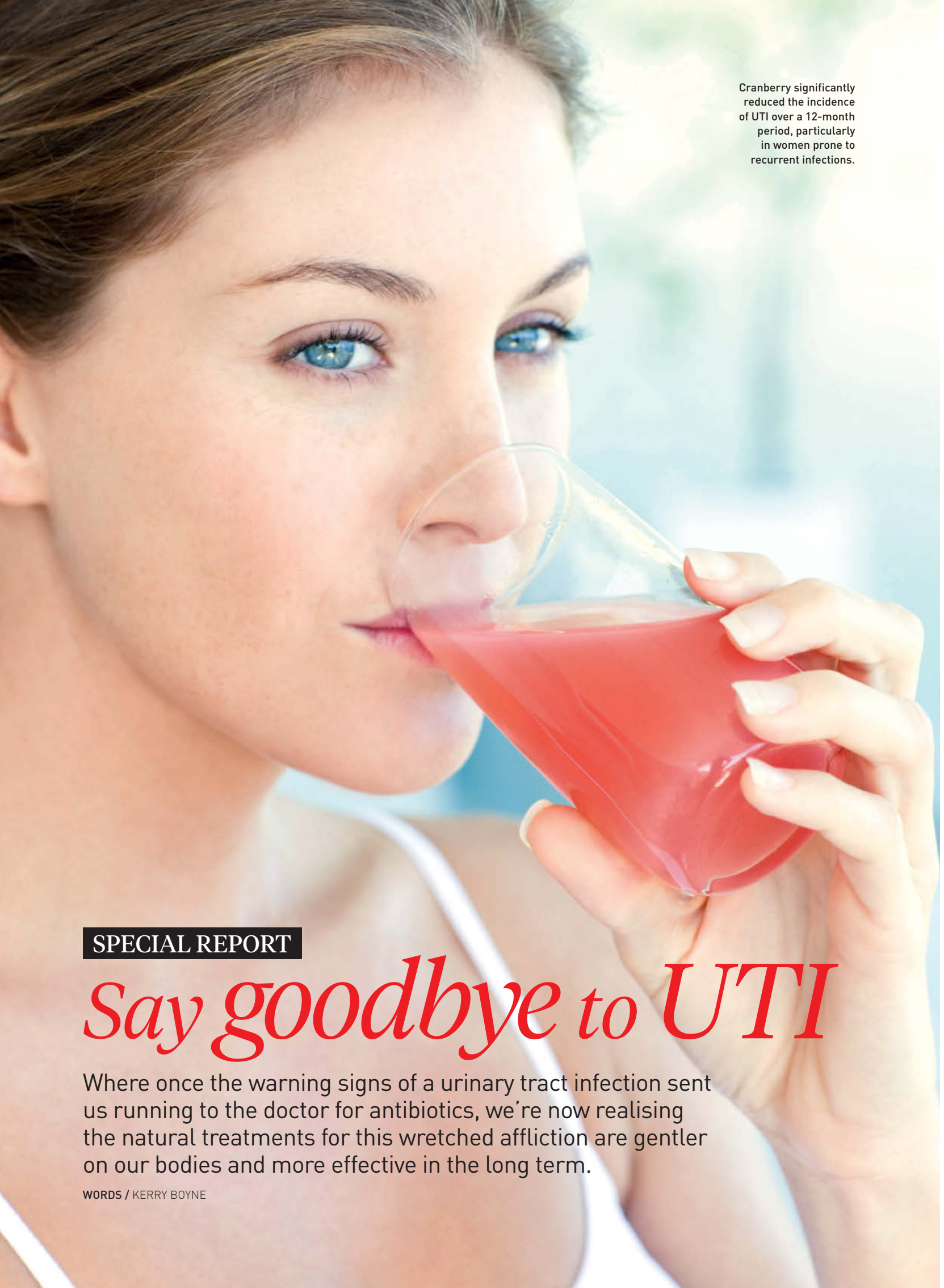




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A close-up, profile shot of a woman with light brown hair and blue eyes drinking from a clear glass. She is holding the glass with her right hand, which has manicured nails. The liquid in the glass is a vibrant red color. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white, suggesting an outdoor setting with light filtering through. The overall mood is clean and fresh.

Cranberry significantly reduced the incidence of UTI over a 12-month period, particularly in women prone to recurrent infections.

**SPECIAL REPORT**

# *Say goodbye to UTI*

Where once the warning signs of a urinary tract infection sent us running to the doctor for antibiotics, we're now realising the natural treatments for this wretched affliction are gentler on our bodies and more effective in the long term.

WORDS / KERRY BOYNE





If you've ever experienced a urinary tract infection (UTI) you'll know the horrible signs only too well: running to the loo every half-hour with what feels like a full bladder, only to squeeze out a pathetically small trickle — scalding its way out. It's a truly miserable feeling and the sheer dread of a recurrence is enough to make you cry.

Simple UTIs do have a tendency to recur, unfortunately. It's estimated that about 20 per cent of women who have one infection will have a recurrence. Of that group 30 per cent will have a third bout, and of that group 80 per cent will have further recurrences.

These statistics refer to women because, well, it's largely a woman's problem. For the obvious reason, men have longer urethras and therefore suffer less from infections of the urinary tract, unless there are prostate problems, have conditions requiring catheterisation or are elderly. By contrast, more than half of all women will experience a UTI in the course of their lifetimes.

While anyone — including children — can develop a UTI, it's most common in young women who have recently become sexually active (often known as "honeymoon cystitis"), in pregnant women and in peri- and post-menopausal women. See the box below for specific risk factors.

### WHAT CAUSES UTI?

Urine is made by the kidneys and travels via connecting tubes called ureters into the bladder. Once the bladder is full, you feel the urge to urinate. When you relax to pee, the bladder contracts to empty its contents via the urethra, the tube that runs from the bladder to the outside. Just like a plumbing system.

#### RISK FACTORS FOR UTIs

- Being female
- Being sexually active
- Pregnancy
- Dehydration
- Vaginal dryness, such as with menopause
- Urinary retention
- Prostate enlargement in men
- Catheterisation
- Mobility limitations
- Diabetes
- Weakened immune system through age, illness or medication
- Urinary tract obstruction

The usual way for urinary tract infections to occur is when bacteria gain access from outside, the most common offenders being *Escherichia coli*, which are responsible for around 90 per cent of UTIs. These are not the dangerous strains that have contaminated food and caused severe acute illness, but the normal *E. coli* found in our intestinal tracts.

The other 10 per cent of infections are most likely to be caused by other gut bacteria such as *Proteus*, *Klebsiella*, *Enterococcus* or staph organisms from skin. Catheterisation can also introduce *Candida albicans*, which can cause a fungal urinary infection.

Which particular micro-organism is the cause of an infection makes a difference to treatment, whether medical or natural.

### SYMPTOMS OF A UTI

While UTIs can sometimes be asymptomatic, particularly in children and elderly people, they are most often accompanied by a distressing set of signs, often striking in the evening when it's not convenient to see a doctor. They can come on so quickly that by morning it's practically unbearable. The most common symptoms are:

- Sensation of burning or pain during urination
- Urinary frequency
- Urinary urgency
- Despite the feeling of a full bladder, only passing a small amount of urine
- Urine is cloudy or pink in colour and may have an unpleasant smell
- Pain in the lower abdomen

### TYPES OF UTI

A bacterial infection can develop in the lower urinary tract and if not treated can make its way further up to become a more serious problem. While UTI is a blanket term, infections caused by the same bugs are also often referred to by their location:

- **Urethritis.** An infection of the urethra, the tube through which urine goes from the bladder to the outside.
- **Cystitis.** An infection of the bladder that typically has moved up from the urethra.
- **Pyelonephritis.** An infection that has moved all the way to the kidneys, though sometimes is triggered by an obstruction of the ureters that causes urine to backflow.
- **Interstitial cystitis.** Not actually an infection, but chronic inflammation of the bladder, diagnosed when there's no

evidence of causes such as infection. The misery is just as acute as with an infection, and all the more so because it's chronic.

For the purposes of this article, which focuses on using natural remedies and supplements, UTI refers to the first two, or infection of the lower urinary tract. This is often termed "a simple UTI". Infection higher up, in the kidneys, is a serious condition that requires advice and treatment from a doctor and will need antibiotics to head off serious illness and permanent damage to the kidneys.

### TREATMENT

The conventional treatment for urinary tract infections by doctors is antibiotics, which can effectively knock the infection on the head quite quickly if it's the right antibiotic for the particular bug. The problem is, antibiotics are only a short-term fix and bring with them other, longer-term problems.

Some strains of the bacteria that

**While it's important not to let a simple UTI progress to something more serious, antibiotics should be the last resort.**

cause UTIs are becoming antibiotic resistant as well. In addition, antibiotics don't discriminate and will kill off the helpful bacteria in your body that work hard to keep the pathogenic organisms under control. So the medications literally sabotage one of your best defences against infection, which can ultimately trap you on a treadmill of recurring infections followed by more antibiotics.

While it's important not to let a simple UTI progress to something more serious, antibiotics should be the last resort. UTIs can be chronic or recurrent, so there is always potential for developing antibiotic resistance. Even doctors are acknowledging that the antibiotic treadmill is both dangerous and ineffective in the long term, even though the bad bugs take a temporary hit from them. Many healthcare practitioners are accepting that a natural approach to prevention and treatment may well be more desirable.

Bacteria that are particularly resistant to antibiotics and can therefore make life miserable are those that exist within a biofilm, a matrix that



Uva ursi, also known as bearberry or beargrape.

## [The herb] uva ursi relieves symptoms quite quickly — sometimes in just a few hours.

shields them from the efforts of both the immune system and antibiotics. Biofilm formation is an important virulence factor for many microbes that want to take up residence in the body, in particular mucosal areas. It's the reason problems like gum disease, chronic sinus infections and recurrent UTIs are so persistent.

There are numerous alternatives to antibiotics, several backed up by research as well as clinical and anecdotal evidence. They range from botanically derived remedies and vitamins to hormone treatment, pantry staples and essential oils. Some help symptoms, while others treat the acute infection; some are preventive and others are both. While many of them can be used and indeed are more effective in combination, it's important to understand that some can be in conflict with one another.

### D-MANNOSE

Fast becoming considered the most effective of natural treatments, d-mannose is a simple sugar that your body metabolises like it does glucose, so it doesn't have the problems associated with fructose and sucrose. It is not converted to glycogen and stored in the

liver, so it has no effect on blood sugar regulation and doesn't "feed" infection.

It's important to realise that d-mannose only works on UTIs caused by *E. coli*, though, but as mentioned that is most infections. D-mannose doesn't actually kill the bacteria; it just makes them unable to stick to the urinary tract and do their nasty work.

*E. coli* have sticky finger-like projections called fimbriae, which they use to hang on to the walls of the bladder so they can move in for the duration. Then they can also make their way upward, Spiderman-style, to wreak more serious havoc.

The fimbriae are tipped with lectin, which binds to the mannose produced by the body, which covers the lining of the urinary tract. The mannose is what allows them to stick like glue. But when a larger amount of mannose is introduced through supplementation, it's mostly excreted in urine, so the lectin-tipped fimbriae bind to the mannose in the urine and exit with it into the porcelain.

In a recent study, 308 women with a history of recurrent UTIs were randomly divided into three groups: one group taking d-mannose daily for six months; the second group taking an antibiotic commonly used for UTIs; the third taking nothing. Overall, 98 of the women had recurrent UTIs: 15 were in the d-mannose group, 21 in the antibiotic group and 62 in the non-prophylaxis group. Not only did the d-mannose group do best in terms of infection but the women taking it had virtually no side-effects from the treatment, while some from the antibiotic group reported mild side-effects.

American Dr Jonathan Wright, a pioneer of the use of d-mannose for two decades, has said that in his clinical experience of prescribing it to more than 200 patients it has been 85–90 per cent effective.

D-mannose is considered very safe, even for children and pregnant women, and works to stop an acute infection and also as a prophylaxis to prevent further bouts in those unfortunate enough to be prone to recurrent UTI. The main downside is it can be difficult to find, though some health shops and compounding pharmacies do stock it. It's easy to buy online.

### CRANBERRY (*VACCINIUM MACROCARPON* AIT.)

While cranberry has been used in folk medicine for centuries, a significant body of clinical and epidemiological studies — too numerous to detail here — have supported its use as a preventive for UTI. One meta-analysis summarised 10 cranberry trials: six using juice, three using tablets and one using both; the conclusion was that cranberry significantly reduced the incidence of UTI over a 12-month period, particularly in women prone to recurrent infections.

The A-type cranberry proanthocyanidins (AC-PACs, a class of flavanoids) present in cranberries have been shown to have anti-biofilm properties against *E. coli* by preventing their adhesion in the bladder. In addition, d-mannose is present in cranberry and other berries, though not at the same levels as in the supplements.

This makes regular supplementation of cranberry capsules or consumption of sugar-free juice particularly useful for those who suffer relapsing or recurring infections (RUTI). (Juice containing added sugar is not recommended as sugar feeds micro-organisms.)

As a bonus, several studies have suggested benefits to oral health from the AC-PACs in cranberries. On the one hand, they have been shown to reduce the virulence of *P. gingivalis* by inhibiting biofilm formation, adhesion, proteinase activity and invasiveness. On the other, they have an anti-inflammatory effect on *P. gingivalis*-associated periodontal diseases.

Cranberry has a high safety rating, even for pregnant women. The supplement form is preferred to avoid fructose and there are some supplements available that combine cranberry with added d-mannose.

### UVA URSI (*ARCTOSTAPHYLOS UVA-URSI*)

Also known as bearberry or beargrape, along with a number of related plants (apparently because of wild bears' liking for the fruit of these plants), uva ursi is a low-growing, trailing shrub native to many parts of the Northern Hemisphere that has several sub-species. The leaves, not the berries, are used in herbal medicine.

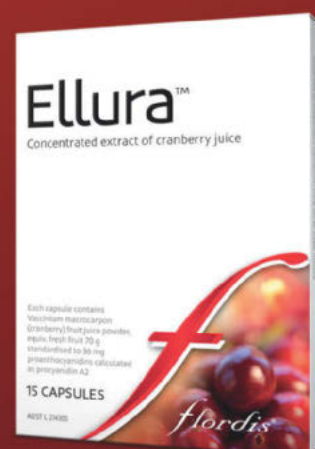
Uva ursi has a long history in traditional herbal medicine of treating conditions of the urinary tract and also chronic diarrhoea (due to its astringent





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tannins). In fact, before sulphur drugs and antibiotics it was the treatment of choice for UTI, pyelonephritis and kidney stones.

It has been approved for treating inflammation of the lower urinary tract by Commission E of the German Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices, the governmental agency that evaluates herbal products for safety and effectiveness. The Commission E monograph lists its use as “for inflammatory disorders of the lower urinary tract”.

Uva ursi relieves symptoms quite quickly — sometimes in just a few hours. It contains a significant amount of arbutin, which is converted in the urine to hydroquinone, a urinary antiseptic. It also acts as a diuretic and has an anti-inflammatory action.

In clinical studies, human subjects were given either extracts of uva ursi or isolated arbutin and the urine of both groups was evaluated. The urine from the uva ursi group showed significant antimicrobial activity against *E. coli*, *Proteus mirabilis*, *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus* and 70 other urinary bacteria. Interestingly, one study demonstrated that arbutin taken alone was not as effective as the plant.

In the only clinical study on uva ursi as a preventive against UTI, it was shown to be statistically more effective than placebo in women with recurrent infections who took uva ursi or placebo for a month and were followed up for a year, with no recurrences in the treatment group. However, this result is academic because it is not considered safe to be taken for that long due to possible toxic effects on the liver.

In fact, expert advice is not to take uva ursi for longer than a week or more than five times a year, so it should never be used as a preventive. It also may conflict with cranberry and vitamin C, as these make the urine acidic and uva ursi needs the urine to be alkaline. Bicarb soda complements uva ursi, as it makes the urine alkaline. This is very important to understand as uva ursi and cranberry taken together may have the effect of cancelling each other out, so to speak.

**Caution:** Uva ursi is toxic in high doses. It should not be used in pregnancy or by anyone who has a kidney infection. It should not be given to children.

#### BERBERINE

Berberine has a long history of use in both Ayurvedic and traditional

Chinese medicine. It is an alkaloid that's present in many plants, including goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*), goldenthread (*Coptis chinensis*), Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*) barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*) and tree turmeric (*Berberis aristata*).

Berberine is extracted from the root, rhizome and stem bark of plants. The extract has shown significant antimicrobial activity against a variety of organisms, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoans, helminths and chlamydia. While berberine can be consumed via herbs like goldenseal and Oregon grape, it's usually taken in supplement form.

Like cranberry and d-mannose, berberine has been shown to prevent the adhesion of *E. coli* to the bladder wall. It does this by inhibiting the synthesis of fimbriae. In one in-vitro study, researchers cultured a strain of *E. coli* from patients with UTI. The *E. coli* cultured on their own were shown to be heavily covered with fimbriae but, when cultured in the

presence of berberine, they did not deliver other health benefits at the same time.

Our bodies make three oestrogen hormones: estrone (E1), estradiol (E2) and estriol (E3). Estriol is considered the weakest of the three, but interestingly its weakness may be one of its strengths. While estriol acts as a weak oestrogen in the breast, endometrium and liver, at the same time it has full oestrogenic responses in the vaginal and bladder epithelium. This means a wealth of benefits without increasing the risk of hormone-dependent cancers.

Bioidentical estriol has been used by women in Europe for more than 60 years and is available over the counter in some countries, as it is in the UK and US, though not FDA approved. The cynical among us might wonder if the lack of FDA approval has anything to do with Big Pharma, as that's who makes the big bucks from synthetic hormone replacement. While E3 is often prescribed in combination with E2 for hormone replacement therapy, you can

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**Vaginal estriol has been shown to consistently relieve urinary symptoms including stress incontinence, dysuria and urgency and, importantly, significantly reduces the incidence of UTIs.**

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presence of berberine sulfate, there were almost no fimbriae.

Berberine has also been shown in a Bangladeshi study to have a beneficial effect on *E. coli*-induced diarrhoea within eight hours of taking it. Other bonuses are that berberine has been shown to lower elevated blood glucose levels as well as total blood cholesterol levels, LDL and triglycerides. Plus, it appears to inhibit the growth of many types of tumour cells.

**Caution:** Berberine should not be taken during pregnancy as it can cause uterine contractions and lead to miscarriage.

#### ESTRIOL CREAM

There is extensive, peer-reviewed data that supports the use of vaginal estriol cream for UTIs in peri- and post-menopausal women. While it requires a visit to your GP for a prescription and blood tests, bioidentical estriol is worth considering as another alternative to antibiotics. As mentioned, UTIs occur commonly around menopause and estriol cream can be used as a preventive for this problem, plus it

talk to your GP about getting your levels checked with a view to having E3 alone.

Estriol is used as a vaginal cream in a 0.5–1.0mg dose, usually daily for the first two weeks, then three times a week. Unlike oral estriol, which is not recommended, it does not accumulate and has shown consistent effects without any adverse impact on the levels of the other oestrogens in the body.

Vaginal estriol has been shown to consistently relieve urinary symptoms including stress incontinence, dysuria and urgency and, importantly, significantly reduces the incidence of UTIs. In a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, women with recurrent UTIs were given either vaginal estriol cream (containing 0.5mg estriol) daily for two weeks, then twice weekly for eight months, or placebo. The result was a dramatic drop in the incidence of UTI in the estriol group vs placebo: 0.5 vs 5.9 episodes a year.

Among its other benefits for peri-menopausal and menopausal women, it relieves vaginal dryness and normalises vaginal flora; relieves menopausal symptoms such as hot flushes and



night sweating; helps to prevent bone loss and increase bone density (though not to the same extent as E2); and has a beneficial effect on the heart, decreasing LDL and increasing HDL cholesterol levels. It has even been shown to reduce brain lesions from multiple sclerosis.

Estriol has also been shown to normalise the proper pH of the vagina, which helps to prevent UTIs, and it helps the gut maintain the right environment for beneficial bacteria (*Lactobacilli*) to flourish.

On top of all these positives, large peer-reviewed trials have demonstrated that vaginal estriol does not increase breast cancer risk. In fact, in one study involving breast cancer survivors, there was a *decrease* in recurrence of the cancer among the estriol users vs non-users.

### PROBIOTICS

Probiotics help to populate the gut with healthy bacteria that keep the pathogenic bacteria in their place, which indirectly leads to a healthy urinary tract. The fewer unhealthy bacteria and yeasts in the digestive tract, the fewer there are ready to migrate to other areas.

A US study of 139 women from a uni student health centre and from the staff of a university hospital (mean age: 30.5 years) with a diagnosis of an acute UTI were compared with 185 age-matched women with no episodes of UTIs during the preceding five years. A questionnaire established the women's dietary and other lifestyle habits to form a risk profile for UTI.

A decreased risk of UTI recurrence was seen in those who regularly consumed fresh juices, particularly berry juices, while even more protective were fermented milk products, though fresh milk products showed no such protective action. This led researchers to conclude that it was the probiotics in the fermented milk products that had the positive effect, not the milk itself.

Probiotics help to populate the gut with healthy bacteria that keep the pathogenic bacteria in their place.



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## SPECIAL REPORT: HEALTH

### URINARY TRACT HEALTH

A number of clinical studies have shown both probiotic vaginal suppositories and oral probiotic supplements containing certain *Lactobacillus* strains (*casei*, *ramnosus* and *crispatus*) have decreased UTI rates significantly; in the case of suppositories containing *Lactobacillus*, growth factor rates of infections decreased by as much as 73 per cent.

Of course, the most powerful probiotics are those found in live fermented foods, such as sauerkraut, yoghurt, kefir, natto and kombucha, among many others.

#### VITAMIN A

There has only been one study on this vitamin's effect on UTI, where it was shown to be helpful for managing non-complicated recurring infection (RUTI) in children. In the study of 24



Among their many uses, essential oils have been shown to exert powerful antimicrobial actions.

**A number of essential oils have been very popular for treating UTI and there is a small amount of science supporting their use for bacterial and yeast infections.**

young patients, 12 received vitamin A in addition to antimicrobial therapy, while the other 12 received only antimicrobial therapy, for 10 days. The children were followed up for a year, with both groups continuing on the antibiotic prophylaxis. Serum levels of vitamin A and beta-carotene were measured periodically.

It was observed that after six months the children in the vitamin A group had a significantly lower rate of infection and, even a year later, their infection rates were still lower than those in the control group, whose infection rates remained steady over the year.

#### VITAMIN C

Vitamin C comes up a lot in forums, such as internet support groups etc. Many people swear by its effectiveness but there is also some science supporting its use for UTIs. It's thought to inhibit the growth of some bacteria by acidifying the urine.

A 2007 study of 110 pregnant women was conducted to assess the effectiveness of vitamin C as a preventive for UTI during pregnancy. The women were divided into two groups. For a period of three months, one group was given a daily dose of 100mg of vitamin C while the other group was used as a control. Urine samples collected monthly from both groups revealed a significantly lower incidence of UTIs in the vitamin C

group (12.7 per cent) than in the control group (29.1 per cent).

Some people take very high doses of vitamin C when a UTI hits, but caution is required as doses over 1000mg can cause diarrhoea and stomach upset. Don't take vitamin C if you are taking uva ursi or berberine; as mentioned, both those remedies work when the urine is alkaline, not acidic. Vitamin C complements both cranberry and d-mannose.

A daily amount of 500–1000mg is considered an appropriate dose when infection is present.

#### VITAMIN D

Low serum levels of vitamin D have been associated with greater incidence of RUTIs in pre-menopausal women. Over a period of three years, 93 women in their 40s with recurrent UTI were compared to 93 age-matched women with no history of recurrent UTI. It was found that the mean serum levels of vitamin D among the women with recurrent UTIs were significantly lower than those of the control group, leading to the conclusion that recurrent UTIs in pre-menopausal women are associated with vitamin D deficiency.

#### ESSENTIAL OILS

Among their many uses, essential oils have been shown to exert powerful

antimicrobial actions. A number of essential oils have been very popular for treating UTI and there is a small amount of science supporting their use for bacterial and yeast infections.

Cinnamon oil has long been used for UTI and studies support its effectiveness on uropathogenic *E. coli*. Trans-cinnamaldehyde (TC), a major component of the oil, has been shown to limit the formation of biofilm bacteria on catheters. It is also known to reduce the adhesion and virulence of *E. coli*. The effectiveness of TC is attributed to multiple factors.

Essential oil extracted from *Salvia officinalis* (common sage) has been shown to inhibit several uropathogens obtained from the urine samples of adults with UTIs. Among the micro-organisms it inhibited were *Klebsiella*, *Enterobacter* species, *E. coli*, *P. mirabilis* and *Morganella morganii*.

Oregano oil, too, has been shown to be effective against *E. coli*, while clove bud oil and thyme oil have also been shown to have strong antimicrobial actions. One study found that a combination of thymol and eugenol, derived from thyme and clove essential oils respectively, was as effective against bacterial vaginosis as standard antibiotic treatments.

Lemon oil is also well regarded by those who regularly use essential oils therapeutically, as are rosemary and bergamot oils. There are premixed blends of various essential oils available, such as K&B Tincture and Thieves, which are particularly favoured for combatting UTIs. Plus, a few



drops of lemon oil in water in the morning is said to be more effective than the juice in water for alkalising urine.

#### **How to use essential oils**

Add 1–3 drops to a therapeutic drink such as unsweetened cranberry or water with d-mannose, or mix with a carrier oil to massage over the soles of the feet or abdomen for a transdermal dose. You can also add a few drops of essential oils to a carrier oil to fill capsules. Your preferred combination of oils can be added to a warm compress or sitz bath, too. Bicarb soda or apple cider vinegar can be beneficial when added to the bath along with the oils.

#### **PANTRY REMEDIES**

There are numerous remedies straight from the pantry that have little or no science backing them up yet mountains of anecdotal support that make them worth mentioning, in our book. The following are particularly effective, especially if all three are taken over the course of the day, though not together at the same time.

##### **Bicarb soda**

What can't this white powder do? Some of the things it can do include cleaning your home, making your baking rise and dealing with fungal infections; it can clean your teeth, stop insect bites from becoming infected, boost your laundry detergent, deodorise your fridge — in fact, deodorise everything from your shoes to the kitty litter tray and the kids' lunchboxes. But how does it help with a UTI?

Oral administration of sodium bicarbonate tablets has been shown in tests to effectively alkalise urine. This means the burning sensation on urination goes away, but it doesn't mean the infection is gone. That will take a little time. Meanwhile, it quickly helps to make you feel better while your other chosen remedies start to take effect. Take a teaspoon in a glass of water three times a day until symptoms have subsided.

Citrate salts have also been shown to have a similar effect. One study showed that sodium citrate significantly improved symptoms in women with UTI by alkalising the urine. Potassium and sodium citrate have also been shown to be effective against urinary candidiasis, a fungal urinary infection often associated with catheterisation. In a clinical study of hospitalised patients, supplementation for a period of two days to a month resulted in a significant increase in urinary pH and the disappearance of candida in the urine.

##### **Apple cider vinegar**

Apple cider vinegar (ACV) is one of those cure-alls that no pantry should be without. The father of medicine himself, Hippocrates, prescribed vinegar mixed with honey for a variety of ills. The main substance in vinegar, acetic acid, has been shown to kill bacteria or prevent them from growing and multiplying. It has a history of use as a disinfectant and food preservative.

ACV is the preferred vinegar for maximum health benefits. It's a probiotic food because it contains a living culture known as "The Mother", consisting of strands of proteins, enzymes and beneficial bacteria. Make sure the vinegar you buy is unpasteurised and contains The Mother, one of the major contributors, along with acetic acid, to the health benefits gained from taking ACV.

Like any vinegar, apple cider vinegar is highly acidic so can be a threat to tooth enamel and the lining of your oesophagus if taken undiluted. Always dilute it in water, if you're drinking it, or make a dressing with it for your mealtime salads. If you're not fond of the taste, try mixing it with olive oil and pomegranate molasses for a delicious dressing. Take a tablespoon in water

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## SPECIAL REPORT: HEALTH

### URINARY TRACT HEALTH

a couple of times a day when you feel the early symptoms of UTI.

While baths are not recommended when you have a UTI, a lukewarm bath with a cup of ACV added may be very helpful. Don't make it hot, though, as too much heat can kill off the beneficial mother culture.

#### Coconut oil

Coconut oil has short-chain and medium-chain fatty acids, including lauric acid, caprylic acid and capric acid. These fats have anti-fungal, antibacterial and antiviral properties and give a good boost to the immune system.

Almost half of the fatty acids in coconut oil is lauric acid and, when coconut oil is digested, it forms a monoglyceride called monolaurin. Lauric acid and monolaurin together can kill pathogenic bacteria, fungi and viruses, including *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Candida albicans*.

In one study into the effect of oral oil pulling on biofilms, coconut oil was found to exhibit antibacterial activity against *Streptococcus mutans* and

Coconut oil was found to exhibit antibacterial activity against *Streptococcus mutans* and antifungal activity against *Candida albicans* present in the mouth.



Photography Getty Images

**Increased water intake means increased urination, which is essential to carry the bacteria to the outside, no matter what treatments you are using.**

antifungal activity against *Candida albicans* present in the mouth. Another study by Irish researchers looked at the antibacterial activity of coconut oil modified by enzymes in a way similar to the effect of digestion, concluding that not only did it strongly inhibit the growth of most *Streptococcus* strains but that further work should be done on its effect on bacterial strains in the gut.

Take one to three tablespoons a day when you have symptoms. And don't worry that it will make you put on weight: coconut oil has actually been shown to help weight loss. If you can't stomach it straight off the spoon, try having it in a smoothie or even a teaspoon in coffee. A tablespoon a day even when no infection is present is a good health habit.

#### FOR GOOD PLUMBING

- Drink enough fluids — dehydration is a risk factor.
- Go when you feel the need — don't hold it in.
- Take showers instead of baths (unless a therapeutic bath).
- Clean the genital area before and after sex.

- Wipe from front to back after going to the toilet.
- Use unbleached loo paper and prefer cotton sanitary pads and tampons.
- Don't use ladies' "hygiene" products, which may contain chemicals that irritate the urethra and genital area.

#### AVOID

- **Sugar.** Sugar is the microbes' friend, feeding them and helping them to grow. Avoid not only cane sugar but also keep your fruit intake minimal and reduce or eliminate grain carbs, especially anything made with processed flours.
- **Alcohol.** Not only is it a sugar source but alcohol is known to irritate the bladder as well. It's also dehydrating, so bad for UTI on all counts.
- **Caffeine.** Caffeine is another bladder irritant you should avoid when you have UTI symptoms. Opt for water, coconut water and herbal drinks.

#### EMBRACE

- **Water.** Of course, pure filtered water (not carbonated) is really your number-one aid in the battle against the buildup of bugs in your system. There's no

better time to adopt the eight-glasses-a-day regimen than when having urinary tract problems. Increased water intake means increased urination, which is essential to carry the bacteria to the outside, no matter what treatments you are using.

- **Herbal teas.** Some herbal teas gently increase urine output. Dandelion is a good one, as are parsley and nettle. These teas have anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting properties, too, and the extra fluid helps to flush out the bacteria.
- **Daily doses of your choice of preventives.** Use cranberry capsules, diluted apple cider vinegar and/or a daily dose of coconut oil as preventives and for their other health benefits. D-mannose can be an excellent preventive as well, though that can be expensive when taken year round. 🍓

#### WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

- If your symptoms worsen after 24–36 hours of natural treatment
- If you have a fever
- If you have back pain around the kidney area
- If there is blood in your urine
- If you experience either nausea or vomiting

Kerry Boyne is the managing editor of WellBeing.



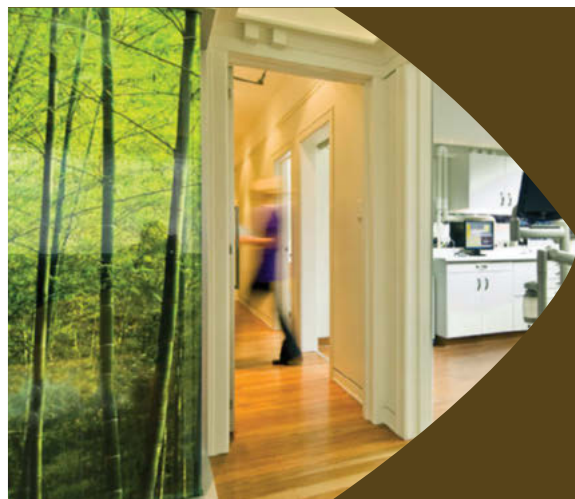
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# Home is where the **ART** is

Adding colour, nature, novelty and eye-catching storage to any space in your home can help that area become a hive of creativity and inspired, deeper thinking.

WORDS / STEPHANIE OSFIELD

**T**hough it's often overlooked as a place of learning, the home is an invigorating environment for adults and children alike in which to flex their intellectual muscle and explore their creative abilities. If you pay special attention to the large and small details of spaces where learning, leisure and work take place, you can establish dynamic rooms that help you feel more stimulated, inspired, inventive, original and productive.

So think beyond style when considering the appearance of your home spaces. Whether you're building, renovating or simply want a décor change, the following interior design, storage and style ideas will help fire up the minds of everyone in your household.

## **BREAK THE RULES**

Thinking outside the square and using objects for functions they weren't originally intended for is a great way to challenge the imagination and encourage creativity.

### **Recycled bookends**

Symmetry creates a visual appeal that draws and satisfies the eye. So having two of anything on either side of some books will instantly foster appeal. Why not try bookending with two:

- Heavy metal Chinese dragons
- Jewellery boxes decorated with beads
- Small round hat-style boxes weighted with something like pebbles (with lids fixed shut) or used to house craft and sewing materials
- Carved sandalwood boxes
- Old-fashioned irons?

### **Pretty door stops**

You can buy door stops in lovely shapes such as owls, pigs, elephants or apples.

### **Cards in photo frames**

Display postcards from an art museum

featuring pictures by celebrated painters like van Gogh, Picasso, Dalí or Toulouse-Lautrec. Or feature beautiful nature shots of mountains or sweeping beaches from places you have visited or postcards others have sent you. In addition, use small photo frames to feature lovely cards with artistic depictions of nature, such as flowers, butterflies, leaves, sea urchins, frogs, peacocks and kittens.

### **Unusual wall hangings**

Think beyond colourful mobiles and wall hangings suspended from hooks on the ceiling. Fix a couple of old bike wheels to the wall and hang toys, puppets or other objects from them on hooks. Make mobiles out of feathers or old silver cutlery, large paintbrushes dipped in different colours and left to dry, origami birds or strands of assorted ribbons.

### **Frames**

Install hooks or rows of lace, twine and

wool across old glass-free mirrors and picture frames. Use them to hang items such as stringed beads, cotton dolls or puppets or single-strand wind chimes.

### **Curtain rings**

Place curtain rings on small pieces of painted or lime-washed dowel rods or wooden or decorative cloth-covered coat hangers and use them to hang all kinds of objects.

### **Ladders & trellises**

A wooden or bamboo ladder can look stunning when hung with sarongs, patterned material or origami paper in different designs. A stepladder can become a stand for pot plants. A wooden garden trellis can be fixed to the wall and used as scaffolding for hook-on wire or cane baskets, or as a rack with hooks to hang aprons, pots, pans and measuring spoons. Or a trellis can provide the backdrop for a natural art installation







Try using  
stepladders  
as shelves.

reproductions. Some homeware stores are now doing vintage-looking clocks, trays and photo frames which have been made to look distressed and aged or fashioned out of recycled goods.

### USE WALLS LIKE CANVAS

Though it's important not to overdo different patterns as the space will appear too busy or frenetic, decorating the walls is an easy way to bring a room alive. Try these tips to jazz up your walls.

#### Install a chalk wall

This is great for your kids to draw on or practise writing letters and numbers. It also provides a place for adults to doodle — a pastime that is very beneficial for problem solving and creativity. Once a month, draw a feature picture that takes up the top part of the board. This might be of something simple like a rainbow or snake, or something a little more complex like a vine with fruit and flowers. Encourage the kids and extended family or friends (if they pop in) to pitch in and add something to the drawing so that it feels like a community effort.

#### Paint a scene, border or pattern

You can get a local artist to come in and reproduce an image of a scene you like. The image may feature dragonflies, frogs on lily pads or the sun, moon and stars for your children's play space and a scene of trees or cherry blossoms or a waterfall in your space. Or you could go for something more 60s, such as a geometric design. If you don't want to paint a wall, consider using different stencils to create a border around the room or patterns on floorboards.

#### Add a different texture

This might mean tiling a wall or putting up coloured parquetry or bamboo panels. Or you might opt for painted, distressed or stained wooden boards or horizontal wood panels, or hang an unusual beaded curtain down the entire wall to create an eye-catching pattern. Alternatively, your feature wall might be covered in appealing shelves that house some kind of collection such as colourful bottles, objects from the sea or novelty salt-and-pepper shakers.

### COLOUR POWER

Unsurprisingly, a monotone colour scheme is not the best choice in an area of the house used for study, play or work. Back in the 1970s, Rikard Kuller found that colour and different patterns had a stimulating impact on the central nervous system and the cortex of the brain, the grey matter associated with our higher-functioning thoughts and



Jars and old suitcases  
(right) are great for  
storage and you can bring  
nature indoors with pot  
plants (above left).

when you weave found objects like leaves, twigs and flowers through it.

### MOTIVATE MINDS

Ensuring your indoor décor includes a range of patterns, textures and features can help both adults and younger family members feel more focused, energised and invigorated within the space.

#### Bring nature indoors

Greenescapes induce feelings of calm and elevate mood, so bring aspects of the beautiful outdoors into your learning spaces wherever you can, using:

- **Pot plants.** Go for plants with a variety of sizes, leaves, textures and colours.
- **Nature trays.** Invest in appealing wooden trays and use them to display lovely found objects from your yard, bushwalks or trips to the beach. Change some items according to the season, or use some objects, such as dried flowers

and beautifully veined leaves, to inspire artworks or decorate craft.

#### Create a sound box

Start off with percussive instruments like castanets, shakers and tambourines then add to the mix over time with items such as a thumb piano, some recorders or small pan pipes. Choose these instruments in natural materials such as wood and bamboo so that they are beautiful to look at as well as listen to.

#### Go vintage

Some lovely objects can be sourced in second-hand or antique stores and they can add instant character and a sense of history to indoor spaces. These include items like wooden chairs, plant stands, storage jars and vases or milk jugs. You can also find lovely retro objects to hang on the walls like vintage flying ducks or geese. If going second-hand is too expensive, look for



actions. Research has since shown that students learn and perform better in an environment that uses some colour rather than institutional white. Add more colours to your home with these ideas.

### A feature wall

Whether you pick a special colour as a contrast to white or a more vibrant version of a lighter colour such as green, the room will immediately seem more interesting. Adding pearl paint to one wall or the ceiling can be a nice soft touch. It can look spectacular, particularly if the walls capture light at some point in the day. Or pick patterned wallpaper and use that. A medium shade of blue, green or light purple works well for a feature wall when combined with warm neutral shades like oyster, beige or sandstone. In his five-year study of schools, famous artist and colour researcher Harry Wohlforth, from the University of Arizona in the US, found that blood pressure reduced and calmness and academic performance improved when students were looking at colours like warm yellow and light blue and when the blackboard colour was blue instead of dark green.

### Accents of colour

These may contrast with the colours on the wall. Add accents through painting shelves, tables and chairs, or through storage boxes, mats and wall hangings.

### Mats

Go for a range of colours, some stripes, a gorgeous paisley pattern or something earthier in a tribal design.

## STIMULATING STORAGE

To ensure that a space helps you feel more creative or cerebral, it helps to have an array of visual triggers. Display inspiring materials used for play, art, craft, problem solving or education so they are easily accessible. Even without touching them, they will help switch on certain parts of your brain.

### Metal buckets

A row of metal buckets of different colours or sizes or of uniform size in silver is a lovely way to store craft items such as ribbon, paintbrushes, crayons, pencils and pipe cleaners.

### Jars & canisters

Jars of all descriptions, spice containers, vintage glass jars and 50s-style coloured canisters can be great for storage. They can also be used in the office to store items like paper clips, drawing pins, rubbers and pencils.

### Hanging shelves

Buy hanging shelves in a few colours or in calico and use stamps and paint to

## TRAVEL WITH YOUR SENSES

Objects and décor from other cultures can help you feel as if you're breaking the monotony of the mundane and stimulate your senses and creativity, too. That's a good reason to give indoor spaces such as a large rumpus sunroom a cultural makeover or add more accents of other cultures throughout your house. Try these quick, easy cultural homages:

■ **Asia.** Add a few decorative Asian cabinets, boxes or a decorative screen. Paper lanterns, a kimono or two hung on the wall, some bonsai plants and suspended origami paper or silk umbrellas can help complete the look.

■ **Sub-Saharan Africa.** Look for prints that are geometric or tribal — you can even throw in a few scatter pillows in a leopard or zebra print. Add some African statues and masks around the room, along with drums, woven

pots and baskets. Finish off with some vibrant wall hangings with designs in earthy colours such as reds, yellows, browns and rust.

■ **Morocco.** Invest in a couple of round ottomans to scatter around the space. A well-placed day bed can add to the right atmosphere. Scatter it with pillows in Moroccan-style designs and hang some silky tab curtains around it. Go for a vibrant mix of colour such as ochre on that wall and contrast with accents such as purple and deep green or gold or rich crimson. Add some coloured teardrop-shaped glass bottles up high where little fingers can't reach them. Hang or display some Moroccan lanterns with stained glass in them around the space to add more lush colour. Leave them empty of candles if you're concerned that they might entice your child to try to want to light them.

cover them with different designs.

### Old cases

Use old suitcases, school cases, guitar cases and picnic baskets to store craft materials (in smaller containers), toys and dress-up clothing. Line them with some pretty paper for extra appeal.

### Baskets

Attach baskets to walls vertically and horizontally for visual interest then use them like shelves to house everything from art materials to books to knick-knacks. Within baskets, use other containers such as a cloth or coloured paper bag that houses craft paper.

### Crates

Plastic ones in bright colours are versatile for storage and handy if the kids decide to sit on them — or in them! Old tea chests and smaller packing crates can look fantastic stocked with colourful items such as gift-wrap paper or painted canvases.

## PLACES TO BE SECRET

### A tepee or pop-up house

These can equate to an indoor cubby house, providing a lovely spot to lie back on a pillow and read or sit up and do

something creative like draw. In a living area or large office, a tepee for adults can provide a soothing space to write a journal or poetry or enjoy a chai or herb tea, meditate or simply sit still and listen to some relaxing music.

### A big cardboard box

If you know anyone who's buying a new washing machine, dryer or dishwasher, ask them to save the box for you. Children enjoy hours of fun in boxes, which are the ultimate simple cubby houses. Smaller cardboard boxes can also be used. Paint them and repaint them from time to time to look like trains or cars or fairy carriages.

### Curtains & nets

These can be used to divide rooms or encircle a couch or a pillow corner to create a secret, private space. Tab curtains are cheap and come in a range of patterns and colours. They also offer the chance to add different texture to a room, whether you opt for something silky or something rougher hewn and woven in appearance. Alternatively, you can use a mosquito net, normally used on four-poster beds, to surround a day bed or reading nook and create a sense of shelter. 🌿

Children enjoy hours of fun in boxes — the ultimate simple cubby houses.

*Stephanie Osfield is an award-winning freelance health journalist, published in Australia and overseas. She is an advocate of nutritional medicine and specialises in all aspects of health, from exercise and disease prevention to stress, depression and women's health issues. You can follow her blog Savvy by Stephanie Osfield at [savvysteph.com](http://savvysteph.com).*



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# *The EYE of the* **VEDA**

The complex, ancient Vedic science of Jyotish astrology is a method for helping you understand your psychology, challenges, gifts and karmic potential. What could it reveal about you?

WORDS / KYLIE TERRALUNA

*“The evolution of the soul and that of the universe are the same.” ~ David Frawley, Astrology of the Seers*

**D**o you consider astrology a science that can accurately illuminate your deeper self? Jyotish or Vedic astrology, like yoga and Ayurveda, is a profound, ancient Vedic science, there to help you achieve self-realisation. Jyotish is one of the six Vedangas or holy limbs

of the Veda, over 5000 years old. If the Vedas were a living being, Jyotish would be its eyes, without which it would be blinded to what lies ahead.

The central message of the Vedas, proclaims Vedic scholar David Frawley (vedanet.com), is that the universe dwells within our own consciousness, extending beyond all time and space. Says Frawley, “We are the entire universe, which is the expression of our own deeper self.” The Jyotish eye sees you in the stars in

a deeply personal way. It shines light on what’s in front of you, and can look back to where you’ve been.

## **A CULTURAL FRAMEWORK**

Jyotish is a complex form of astrology steeped in Indian thought, culture and philosophy. Like yoga, it has become a spiritual export, now available if you seek it. In India, Jyotish is engrained as a way of life. Children are named after the sun, moon and light — Ravi,





Chandra and Jyothi — and birthdays are celebrated not on the same day each year but “when the astrological relationship between the sun/moon is the same as when you were born”, explains Dennis Flaherty, president of the Council of Vedic Astrology (councilvedicastrology.com).

*Jyoti* is Hindi for “light” and *Isha* is “lord” or “god”. Jyotish was originally handed down orally through enlightened sages or *rishis*. Shri Yukteswar, guru of Paramahansa Yogananda (the author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*), was a great yogic astrologer.

### TYPES OF JYOTISH

Of the five known styles of Jyotish, Parashari Jyotish is the most widely practised today. It deals with natal astrology, relying on unique, individual birth charts and discovering correct birth times for interpretation. Nadi Jyotish, another form, is secretly guarded and carefully passed down within certain families of Indian astrologers. According to Hart deFouw and Robert Svoboda, authors of *Light on Life*, Nadi collections contain horoscopes of only those destined to receive them.

### SIDEREAL & TROPICAL ASTROLOGY

Vedic astrology uses the sidereal zodiac of the fixed position of the stars. Western astrology uses a tropical version based on the vernal equinox. Neither is incorrect, but Vedic astrologers say their system is accurate, pointing out that the tropical system is now around 24 degrees out. This means that under this system a Vedic astrologer may change your sun sign to the previous sign.

In Vedic astrology, the ascendant or rising sign is of great importance, and represents the physical body and material incarnation. Next is the moon — the mind and emotional nature — then the sun — the self, soul or rationality. The sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn are examined in your chart, as well as the two lunar nodes: Rahu, the north node, and Ketu, the south node.

### THE GRAHAS

In Jyotish the planets are seen as gods, an “expression of a cosmic intuition”, explains Frawley. They contain deeper meanings for the cosmic mind. In Sanskrit, a “planet” is a *graha*, meaning something that “grabs”, “holds” or “seizes” you. Frawley warns, “If we do not

### FAMOUS CHARTS

Had Hitler understood karmic law and became aware of his chart, could he have prevented the mass murder and destruction he caused? Perhaps he would have used it to further his power, but at least others could have been warned. In one transition in Hitler’s chart, he could have become an artist had it been encouraged. In *Light on Life*, deFouw and Svoboda say there was a planetary war going on in his chart between Mars and Venus, with Mars the ultimate victor. Hitler’s chart indicated a “warlord” and a brief, destructive “ruler of the Earth”. Could his anger have been tempered with astro-remedies, calming the calamitous fire within?

Marilyn Monroe’s chart predicted her beauty, fame, wealth, charity, sensuality, her difficult childhood, multiple marriages and the emptiness she must have felt in her life. Her tragic death is revealed through her chart as well. A karmic counsellor could have helped remedy some of it, that which was not fixed, and provided active, accurate solutions to ease her suffering. Einstein’s chart, like his life, was also exceptional.

**The Jyotish eye sees you in the stars in a deeply personal way. It shines light on what’s in front of you, and can look back to where you’ve been.**

understand the energy of a planet within us, it will bind and lead us into sorrow and conflict.” Through inner enquiry, though, you reach the deeper spiritual purpose of Jyotish, transcending the planetary forces within.

### PLANETARY DOSHAS

Planets are like *doshas*, the biological humours in Ayurvedic medicine. When balanced, they sustain, and when out of balance, they wreak havoc.

The planets correspond to doshas as follows:

- *Vata* (air and ether): Saturn, Mercury, Rahu
- *Pitta* (fire and water): sun, Mars, Ketu
- *Kapha* (water and earth): moon, Venus, Jupiter

Mars, a hot planet, causes pitta disorders like fever and inflammation. In Ayurvedic astrology, Frawley says, “Its influences can be countered by cooling foods, cooling herbs, a cool climate and cool colours, as well as by special gems and *mantras* for the planet, adjusted according to the planetary periods and transits operative in the individual chart.” In this way, Ayurveda and yoga can be powerfully implemented alongside precise Jyotish timings.

Raja Perry, a Sydney-based Vedic astrologer (raja-perry.com), says, “Jyotish should be seen as a tool for self-knowledge. It will help you understand the influences of why you are the way you are.”

Perry explains that Jyotish introduces you to your personal planetary energies and how each planet affects your psychology. He provides an example: “A person with a strong Mercury — speech, intelligence, communication, analytical personality — can also mean they may not be visionary or creative, so this person could [need to work on developing] more right-brained activities such as art, music, intuition. A Mercurial person is not likely to develop their intuition without this being pointed out to them.”

### THE KARMIC COUNSELLOR

Frawley asserts that a good astrologer can be best defined as a “karmic counsellor ... guiding clients on how to better optimise their karmic potential in life, and helping them to understand their unique karmic code and how best to implement it”. Karma is often misunderstood as a kind of punishment, but is better explained as cause and effect. Some karmas are fixed while others are more easily remedied, and karmic law has its own timing: the effects can present during another incarnation.

Jyotish “helps rectify our karma relative to the deeper *samskaras* [imprints] that may be out of harmony with our planetary type and our soul’s level of manifestation”, explains Frawley. Flaherty adds that Jyotish “forecasts the onset of the karmas that have been allotted to us so that we may experience, and have gratitude for, the *subha* [positive] karmas and experience, as well as ameliorate the *papas* [negatives] which expands our consciousness”. He continues, “The goal is not to avoid our karmas, but to experience them in our consciousness,



which grows our consciousness in our journey toward liberation and enlightenment. Otherwise what is the point of existence?"

The therapies of light are called Jyotish Chikitsa and include gems, mantras (words of power), *yantras* (power diagrams), special rituals (*pujas* and *yajnas*), charity, counsel of the wise, meditation and other yogic methods that counter the graha's (planet's) weaknesses from

"gripping" you. These therapies lessen the influences of negative planetary combinations or imbalances in your chart. Frawley says, "They help strengthen the aura and immune system, and can remove negative karmic influences, negative thoughts and subtle environmental pollutants, like low-level radiation."

Gemstones need to be flawless and Perry recommends the company Astral Gems ([agt-gems.com](http://agt-gems.com)) to make your

lifetime piece. After the herbal-infused talisman is made, you are advised on performing mantras and rituals over it at the most auspicious time before initially wearing the jewellery.

Yildiz Sethi, a Brisbane-based Vedic astrologer and author ([yildizsethi.com](http://yildizsethi.com)), is cautious when it comes to recommending therapies for general use. She says astro-remedies are special and not to be used lightly. Drawing on yogic principles of surrender, practice and detachment, you can transcend the planetary forces in your life. To gain the higher spiritual benefits of astro-remedies requires Jyotish support, *sattvic* (pure) intentions and one-pointed concentration.

Sethi is also a professional counsellor and family constellations facilitator and feels strongly about counselling as a part of the Vedic astrologer's role of *ahimsa* or not doing harm. She says that most karmic situations can be improved upon but, if they can't, it becomes about how easily you can accept your life.

## A PERSONAL READING

A personal reading often begins with an invocation chant to Ganesh, Lord of Vedic astrology. A Vedic astrologer will have performed purification rituals prior to your reading and meditated on the information for intuitive insight.

You gain an education about Jyotish along the way, exploring what planets appear in what combinations in houses, transits, phases and timings for events that are crucial to your life path. You can ask to focus on something specific, such as love, career, health or your spiritual purpose.

Sethi says, "Jyotish is a wonderful cosmic map of your reincarnation cycle towards enlightenment stage, for exploring and understanding your own psychology, challenges, gifts and where you can make the most of things."

What could Jyotish reveal about your chart and life? What could you learn about your unique karmic code and where you may be headed? How might the proper use of astro-remedies balance and harmonise you for the evolution of your soul, that which expresses the entire universe from within? 🌀

*Kylie Terraluna is a writer and yoga teacher on the Vedic path of wisdom. She travels Australia teaching WellBeing's Yoga Immersion Workshops for Love and Happiness. Join her for a beautiful weekend of transformation. Learn more at [kylieerraluna.com.au](http://kylieerraluna.com.au).*

## 2015 VEDIC ASTROLOGY PREDICTIONS BY YILDIZ SETHI

The Vedic New Year begins in April. Dennis Flaherty makes available two-monthly detailed predictions on his website, [vedicsciences.com](http://vedicsciences.com). The following predictions are for the Vedic year April 2015 to March 2016, by Yildiz Sethi. Sethi notes that these are general predictions only. For more personal detail, an individual reading is recommended.

During the 10-month period from April 2015, those with Virgo or Pisces rising (ascendant) are in focus due to the transit of the karmic axis of Rahu and Ketu causing psychological and emotional shifts that encourage valuable personal growth.

April is a reflective period for those with Leo rising or their Sun in Leo or Pisces. There could be elements of déjà vu or chance meetings, so stay open to what may be coming your way.

May is a motivational period for those with a strong Aries influence such as a rising sign, moon or sun in Aries. Virgo people should take care not to make impulsive decisions during this month.

June and July are especially good months for those with Cancer rising or with planets in Cancer, June being a significant period for relationships or new business opportunities. On July 7, the mighty Jupiter moves from Cancer into Leo, shining its beneficial influences on Leo, Sagittarius, Aquarius and Aries so that any rising signs or important planets receiving this can give benefits during the forthcoming year. July sees those with strong Scorpio influences having to take stock, re-evaluate and then move on, as there are lighter times coming up.

During the next two years, Saturn in transit is having a strong influence on Scorpio, Capricorn, Taurus and Leo. This will cause obstacles in encouraging attention to detail, structure and discipline.

August is a strong period for Leo- and Aquarius-rising people and their relationships. September and, more so, October are intense periods of ideas and inspiration for those with Virgo rising, so enjoy the creative flow.

Librans may feel more creative during November, so make the most of this with your ideas and projects. November and December may be particularly emotional for Virgo-rising people, so keep calm, do some yoga and prioritise relaxation. You could also use this energy for motivation into positive action. People with Scorpio and Capricorn rising may be feeling inspirational during December and into January 2016.

During February, the Rahu/Ketu karmic axis moves into Leo and Aquarius, bringing these rising signs into focus to be stirred up for the next 18 months. Get ready for the changes that will be brought to the surface.

During March, those with a Scorpio rising or planets in Scorpio need to take time out to pamper themselves and not take life or themselves too seriously.

### Eclipses

Eclipses are important times symbolically. Those points or the planets that are close to an eclipse point can trigger change and growth for the planet involved for several months afterwards. Keep an eye out for the following eclipses, which may affect your rising sign or the planets involved:

- Lunar eclipse on April 14, 2015, in Virgo at 20°20'
- Solar eclipse on September 13, 2015, in Leo at 26°07'
- Lunar eclipse on September 28, 2015, in Pisces at 10°
- Solar eclipse on March 9, 2016, in Aquarius at 24°51'
- Lunar eclipse on March 23, 2016, in Virgo at 9°12'



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# Yoga for difficult times

Life isn't always smooth sailing but, when challenging winds disturb the waters below you, your yoga practice can help you better ride the waves and chart a calmer route.

WORDS / KYLIE TERRALUNA PHOTOGRAPHY / JAMIE CLEARY

*"Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly." ~ Proverb*

Sometimes things are going along just so when, suddenly, you're in crisis. It could be financial trouble, natural disaster, divorce, loss of a loved one, serious illness or something equally painful. During life's most challenging moments, the guided wisdom and practices of yoga provide tremendous gifts of support, nourishment and healing, opening your heart to universal love. You may even discover that the greater the difficulty, the greater your spiritual opportunity to evolve.

## JNANA YOGA: THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

The ancient yogic text *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* is a treatise on how to end suffering. Patanjali teaches that all suffering occurs from misunderstanding the nature of reality. You mistake the impure, distressing, impermanent and transient as pure, as happiness, unchanging and the self.

In yoga, you practise observing the body-mind without judgement, where you notice all thoughts, feelings and sensations as mere ripples on the deeper, still waters of awareness. Ultimately, it frees you from identifying with "your story" — the ego, your body, your thoughts, feelings, sensations of suffering and happiness — replacing it with the clarity of pure awareness.

When you experience pain and hardship, yoga *asana* (posture) eases exhaustion, supports your emotional wellbeing and helps with your ability to cope. Yoga practice generates more *prana* (life force) for you, cleansing your *nadis* (energy channels). When

consciousness settles through practice, it can reflect pure awareness, and from there you can open to the possibility of acceptance. The inner journey is a softening; a sweetness of opening the heart to love.

## SURRENDER YOUR EFFORTS

A crisis can accelerate your spiritual understanding in a way that might not have been previously accessible. Surrender to *Ishvara Pranidhana* (the divine) at such a time can become an awakening without comparison. You realise your efforts are divinely supported and, through surrender, awareness expands. Take solace in the stillness that resides within your heart; it is there for you and can be found.

Effort descends into effortlessness through intention and loving practice. If this is your spiritual turning point, the scriptures may come alive for you as you learn to let go of suffering. *Atha* means "now" and is how the *Yoga Sutras* begin. Now may be the time for *svadhyaya*: the study of the self through the sutras.

## THE KLESHAS & MEDITATIVE ENQUIRY

Yoga advises to watch the aversion to suffering and let it play out without judging or identifying with it. As Patanjali instructs, examine the true nature of suffering, understanding the nature of the five *kleshas* (afflictions) within your life. The *kleshas* are:

- *Avidya*: ignorance, misapprehension about reality
- *Asmita*: egoism, identifying the self with the intellect
- *Raja*: attachment
- *Dvesa*: aversion
- *Abhinivesah*: clinging to life

From there, allow the stillness of meditation to subdue the *kleshas*. Enter meditative enquiry through intimate honesty, such as, "What happens if I allow the universe to *breathe* me?" and feel into it, or, "Can I know this without suffering?" or the simple profundity of, "Who am I?"

## DO LESS, BE MORE ... SLOW DOWN

Chip Hartranft in his new translation of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* says *asana* is a window that opens onto some of our deepest personal conditioning and the suffering it generates. "In order to relax into things as they actually are, one must surrender every last drop of the internalised desire to feel good. That desire is shaped by our most cherished ideas about what constitutes good and bad, as well as by ingrained, organic perceptions of pleasure, pain and neutrality ... In *asana* one must do less to be more." Transcending conditioned notions, expectations and beliefs in this way liberates you for greater happiness.

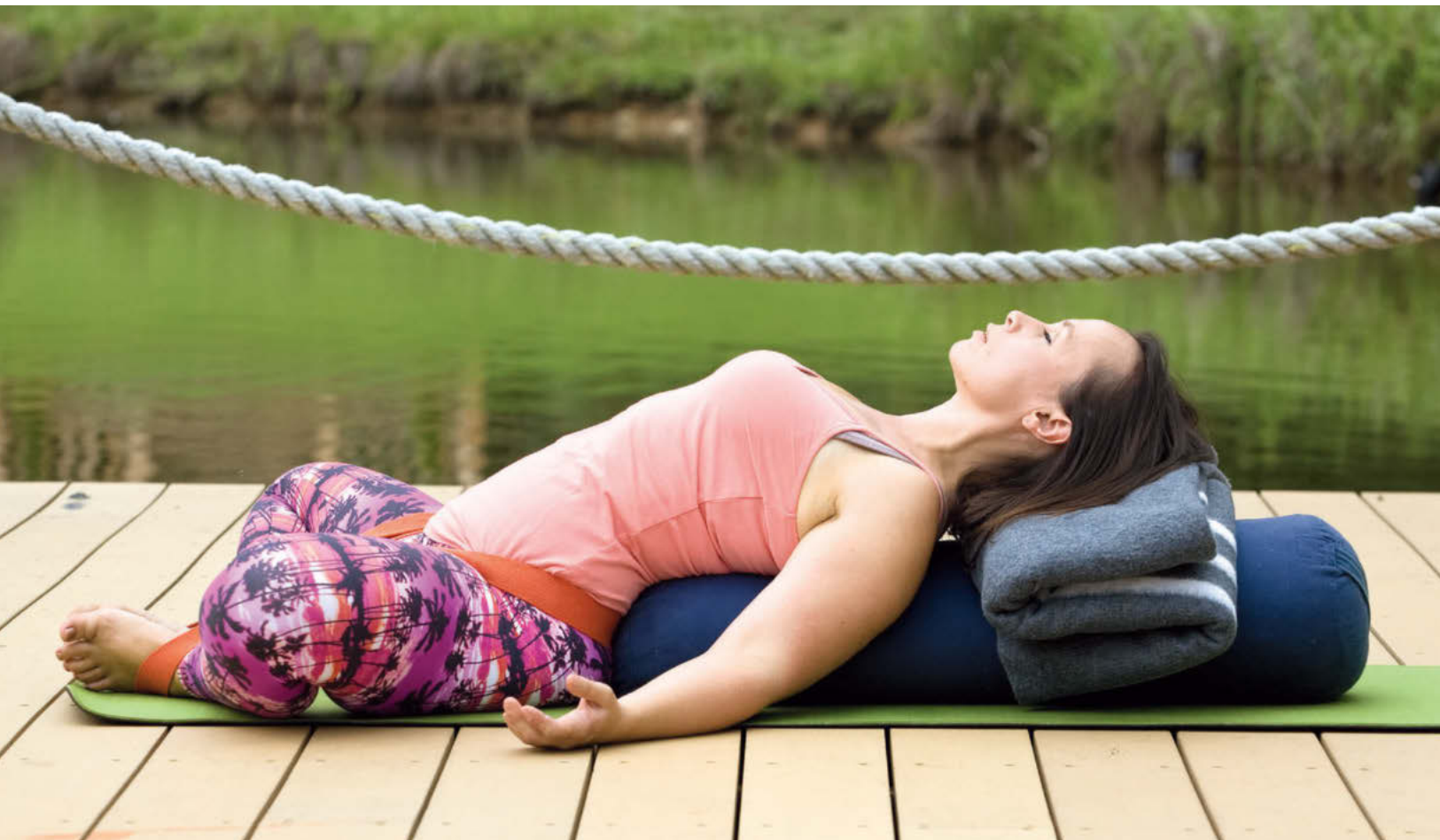
Give yourself permission to let go of certain tasks and slow down. Do only what is necessary and prioritise relaxation and adequate sleep. Focus your energy on a creative outlet. Be kind to yourself during difficult times, slowing the exhalation and breathing into your belly several times a day.

Increase yoga practices that lead to an open heart. By attending yoga classes, workshops and retreats, you affirm your applied daily practices and feel connected with others. The positive approach of a compassionate teacher as guide is part of the healing process.

## INNER STILLNESS & GRATITUDE

Through yoga you learn to remain open to what arises, see its transience and





let it go. Allow for sorrow and grief and a whole array of emotions. Observe them and minimise shock by calming the nervous system response through restorative yoga. Practise gratitude for the simplest of things, such as a flower in bloom, the sunset on the horizon, your legs and feet for carrying you forward. Surrender all efforts back to the source of existence. Remind yourself of the positives available to you in your life.

Dr Lauren Tober, a clinical psychologist and yoga teacher, advises to “practise being with your body, thoughts, beliefs just as they are, then you develop trust in yourself to be OK with whatever arises”. During crisis moments and life’s difficulties, Tober asks clients to notice where they feel joy in their bodies and tap into it, rather than focus on aches and pains and forgetting to focus on joy. Alternatively, she advises to think of a time when you felt joyful. “It’s about developing inner resources for safety, security and joy,” she says. Tober recently launched an online course, Daily Dose of Bliss, to help people navigate their lives ([laurentober.com](http://laurentober.com)).

### AYURVEDIC BALANCE

Difficult times can lead to *dosha* imbalance. If anxiety is heightened and you are having trouble focusing on a task, *vata* may be off-balance. To become grounded, practise restorative

## Be kind to yourself during difficult times, slowing the exhalation and breathing into your belly several times a day.

yoga, focusing on the subtle breath movements. Consume good-quality oils or ghee and eat regularly; routine is the key. Perform *abhyasa* (daily self-massage) with quality sesame oil. *Abhyasa* is a loving act of self-care that cannot be underestimated.

If you are heading towards anger or frustration, chances are *pitta* needs attending. Cool the fire with herbs like mint, coriander and fennel; avoid eating chilli or curries. Cool the brain with restorative poses that rest the frontal lobes by resting the forehead on a bolster. Perform *abhyasa* lovingly with cooling coconut oil.

If you are headed for a heavy, inert depression, like you want to stay in bed all day, *kapha* is likely out of balance. Twelve rounds of energetic *surya namaskar*, sun salutations, will help move kaphic depression. Avoid ice-creams and sweet, sour or salty foods. Play upbeat, uplifting music and practise heart-centred yoga that energises and restores. Perform *abhyasa* with olive or mustard oils.

### PRANAYAMA

Connect with your breath and slow the exhalation. This creates an inner calming response. Practise the Full Yogic Breath, inhaling fully into the belly, the chest and the throat in that order, then exhaling fully from the belly, chest then throat with each and every breath.

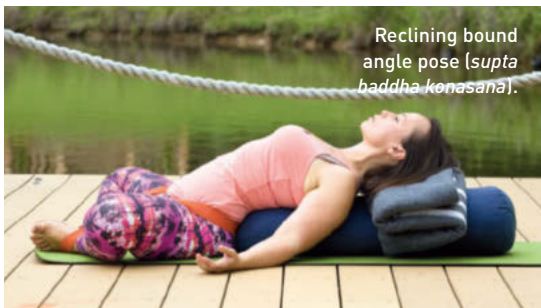
### RESTORATIVE YOGA

Restorative poses hold your being and provide nurturance on multiple levels. These gently physical holding poses offer opportunities to let go of traumatic wounds from within the body, giving freedom towards new life.

The poses are designed to reduce stress and restore balance to your nervous system. By restfully bending backwards over a bolster or forward bending to hug it, you can feel deeply supported and bring emotional healing to your body-mind. Layers of tension are released the longer you hold the restful pose, cleansing your system. The parasympathetic nervous system response to each pose has an immediate calming effect, offering receptivity into stilling consciousness through meditation. Binding with straps in restorative poses contains you, allowing for further release and letting go as you are physically supported without needing to hold yourself in place.

For this practice you will need a chair, mat, blanket, bolster and strap.





Reclining bound angle pose (*supta baddha konasana*).

### Reclining bound angle pose (*supta baddha konasana*)

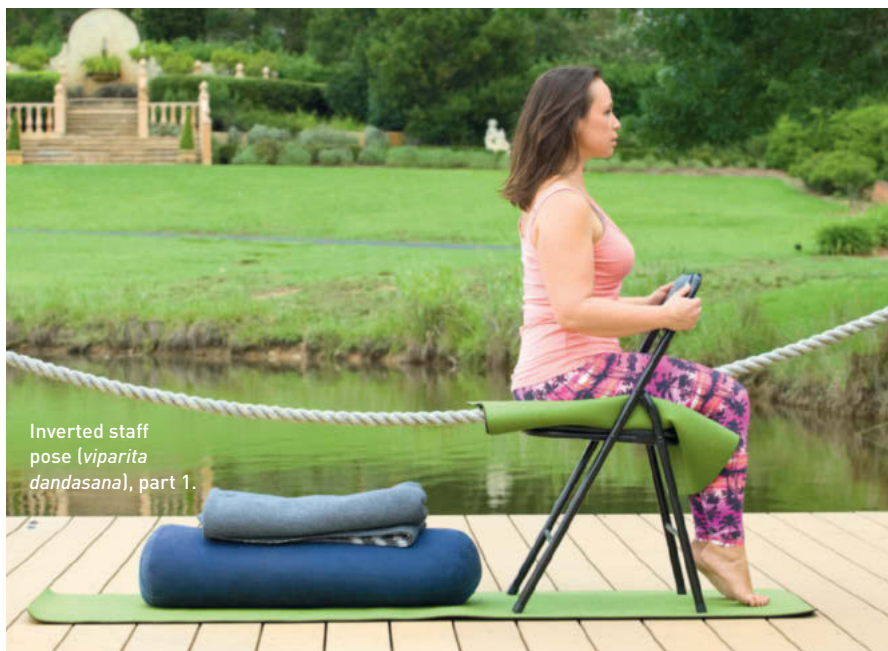
Place a three-fold blanket on a bolster as a firm pillow. Sitting with buttocks against back of bolster, bend knees, placing soles of feet together. Loop strap around hips near sacrum (not lower back), over top of thighs and under ankles. Pull strap to comfortably tight position. Gently recline over bolster on exhalation. Adjust position of blanket so it's under head and neck, not shoulders. Rest arms to sides, palms up. Rest deeply, naturally lengthening the breath, sigh tension away. Stay there for a few minutes. Slowly come to sitting, remove strap.



Downward-facing hero pose (*adho mukha virasana*).



Intense forward stretch (*supported uttanasana*).



Inverted staff pose (*viparita dandasana*), part 1.



Inverted staff pose (*viparita dandasana*), part 2.

### Downward-facing hero pose (*adho mukha virasana*)

Sitting on knees facing bolster, separate knees to width of mat, bring big toes to touch. Inhale. On exhalation, pivot from hips, folding over bolster. Wrap arms around bolster, hugging it gently. Turn head to the left. If you have a yoga sandbag, place this evenly over your sacrum. After a while, turn your head to the right. Slowly release from pose.

### Intense forward stretch (*supported uttanasana*)

Standing feet hip-width apart, lift kneecaps. Inhale. Exhale bending forward, placing forehead on bolster, arms resting on top. Add extra blankets for increased bolster height as needed. Tilt forward so hips, knees and ankles are in line. Keeps ribs back, shoulders away from ears, soften backs of

knees. Breathe and relax. Hold pose for a few minutes, coming up slowly.

### Inverted staff pose (*viparita dandasana*)

Place bolster in front of chair lengthways, yoga mat folded and hanging over chair. Climb through back of chair. Hold sides of chair, slide hips towards back of chair so buttocks rest on back edge of chair, and mid-thoracic presses on front edge of chair. Place crown of head lightly on bolster. Straighten legs. Hold pose for a few minutes. Coming out of pose, sit upright for a moment, then climb out. This soothing pose symbolises the yogi's salutation to the Divine.

**Caution:** Only perform this pose if you have experience getting into it; otherwise, practise *setu bhandha sarvangasana* (supported bridge pose with a block under sacrum or lying over two bolsters lengthways, head and shoulders resting on floor). Do not perform this pose if you have high blood pressure, are pregnant or have eye problems such as glaucoma or detached retina.



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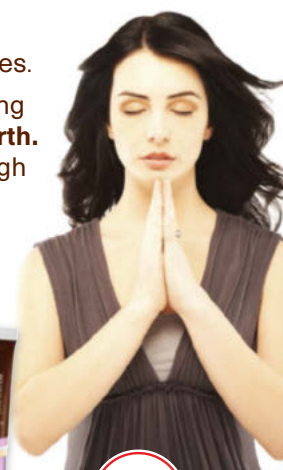
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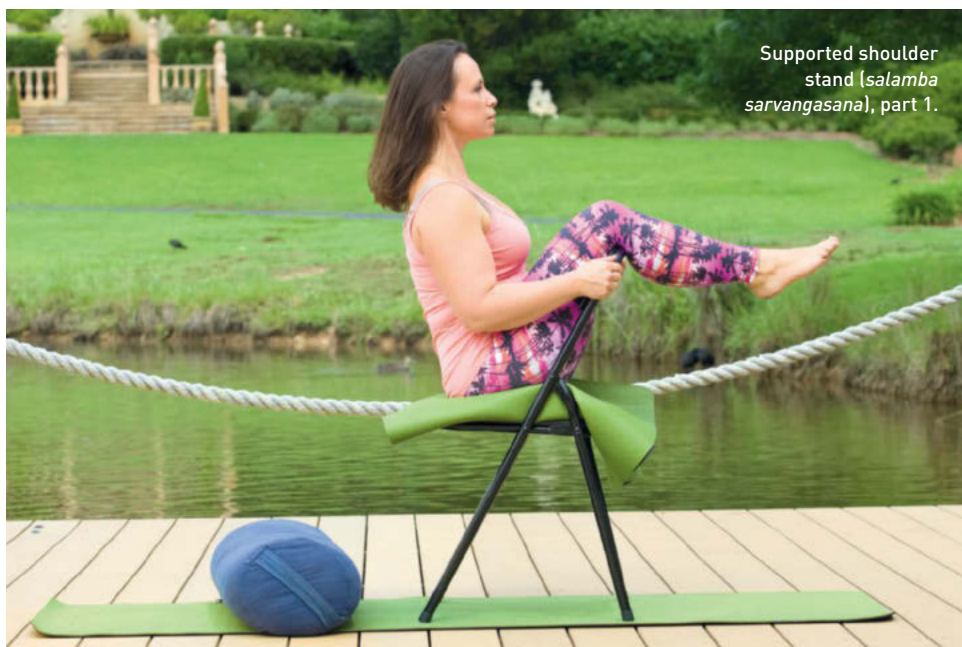
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Supported shoulder stand (*salamba sarvangasana*), part 1.



Supported shoulder stand (*salamba sarvangasana*), part 2.

### Supported shoulder stand (*salamba sarvangasana*)

Place bolster in front of chair sideways, yoga mat folded and hanging over chair. Climb onto chair, buttocks towards back of seat, face back of chair. Holding on, raise legs over back of chair, slide your back and buttocks over the edge of seat. Shoulders resting on bolster, head on floor. Buttocks, lower back and waist rest on front edge of chair. Lift and straighten legs. Hold pose for several minutes. To release, place feet on chair, gently push chair away and lie buttocks and back over bolster for a few minutes more.

**Caution:** If you are not familiar with this pose, leave it out until you can be assisted by your yoga teacher. The same contraindications as for *viparita dandasana* apply to this pose.

### Supported head-to-knee pose (*janu sirsasana*)

Sitting on mat, bend left leg and bring heel to groin. Foot touches right thigh. Place bolster with folded blanket across right calf. Inhale, lift spine and arms up,



Supported head-to-knee pose (*janu sirsasana*).



Inverted lake pose (*viparita karani*).

exhale pivoting forward from hips, rest forehead on blanket. If you need extra height, rest bolster and blanket on chair. Draw shoulders down, close eyes. Stay for one minute before changing sides.

This pose activates the heart chakra, helping treat depression and insomnia.

### Inverted lake pose (*viparita karani*)

Place bolster or folded blankets close to wall, with small gap. Sit sideways on edge of bolster, left hip touching wall. Bring legs up the wall as you bring head and shoulders to rest on floor. Adjust so buttocks touch wall. Strap thighs together just above knees to allow for deep restoration. This pose alleviates exhaustion, boosts confidence and reduces depression.

Afterwards, lie in *savasana*, the full relaxation pose for full yogic breath, followed by the meditation below.

### A meditation for difficult times

This meditation is adapted from one given by Baba Lokenath Brahmachari (1730-1890).

Sitting comfortably, bring your attention to your breath. Offer all that you are, and everything that arises, to the light within the breath. See the light of the inhaling and exhaling breath. See yourself as a spark of this brilliant, diamond-white light, surrounded in it, and as the essence of it. Allow this divine light to flow through you, informing and forming your life. Offer all difficulties into the light. Let the light burn them away until they disappear into it. 🌸

*Kylie Terraluna is a writer and yoga teacher on the Vedic path of wisdom. She travels Australia, teaching WellBeing's Yoga Immersion Weekends for Love and Happiness. Join her for a beautiful weekend of transformation. For more information, visit [kyliterraluna.com.au](http://kyliterraluna.com.au).*



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# UNDER PRESSURE

A child's peer group is vital their development. However, if your child starts do things they wouldn't normally do because of a desire to be liked, it's time to intervene.

WORDS / CARROL BAKER





**W**hen five-year-old Jenna got out her craft scissors and started hacking off her Barbie doll's long tresses, her mother Dianne was appalled. After gently questioning her daughter as to why, Jenna knowingly rolled her eyes (as only a five-year-old can) and said long hair was "so yesterday". Apparently — even to kindy kids — peer group trends matter.

Think peer pressure and you probably imagine surly teenagers doing things they know they shouldn't because that's what the cool kids do. But, according to new research, the desire to conform starts a whole lot earlier than that.

Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany conducted a study following 96 four-year-olds in two group activities involving reading books and turning lamps off and on, designed to test their desire to go with the group majority. The results overwhelmingly showed that children conform publicly in peer pressure situations, even when privately they have different opinions.

Not only does peer pressure begin at an early age, but these days it's also happening on a larger and more dynamic scale, particularly with teens and tweens, thanks to social media platforms like Facebook, Kik, Snapchat and Twitter. The effects of peer pressure can be more immediate, as kids tune into what's hot and what's not with a simple mouse click.

With the advent of social media, a new twist on peer pressure called FOMO (fear of missing out) has also emerged: a sense of anxiety that you aren't doing the same as your peer groups or haven't been invited to a specific social event! This underscores the angst that is at the very core of peer pressure.

### THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY

It seems that peer pressure is virtually intrinsic: it's human nature to learn from others and they, in turn, learn from you. Unfortunately, peer pressure can influence children to do things they wouldn't normally do because of their desire to be liked by others. Peer pressure can stifle individuality and free thinking and be a catalyst for bullying behaviour. With the increase in online technology, research shows more than twice as many children have been bullied online than face to face. Of the 20,000 students aged 8–14 included in The Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence

Study, 30.5 per cent were bullied online and 14 per cent face to face.

However, peer pressure isn't all bad. Warren Cann, psychologist and CEO of the parenting website Raising Children Network, says it's important to remember that peer pressure can be both negative and positive. "Peer groups have earned a bad rep," he says. "It's almost always suggested that peer groups exert negative pressure on children, but it's important to keep it in perspective — peers or friends play a vital role in a child's development."

That is true. Peer pressure can be a powerful force to motivate children to step outside their comfort zone, play a sport they might not have thought of or join the drama club, for example, because that's what their friends or other kids do. The right peer groups can also provide positive role models of how to be honest, kind and fair towards

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**"It's almost always suggested that peer groups exert negative pressure on children, but peers or friends play a vital role in a child's development."**

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others. Looking at the big picture, peer groups help children to define who they are, make them feel valued and give them a sense of belonging.

### MANAGING PEER PRESSURE

There is no denying that dealing with peer pressure as a whole can be challenging, though. Senior teacher and director of Powerful Parenting Australia, Davina Sharry, says peer pressure is really a double-edged sword. "It's human nature to want to be included with others, but it's also human nature to have your own voice and want to stand on your own two feet," she says.

The problem with facing peer pressure is that kids naturally want to be liked and respected by their peer groups, which can cloud their judgement. It's vital, then, to empower your child with the knowledge, tools and healthy attitude to deal with the negative aspects of peer pressure.

Sharry tends to compare the attitude kids need to have when facing peer pressure to climbing a mountain, in that it might seem like an insurmountable task at first but it can be conquered

by learning the skills needed. "Some children might need to work on their body language, or eye contact, the volume of their voice when saying no, or the words they need," she says. "It can help if parents role-play and practise with them, and when they get to the top of that mountain they won't feel vulnerable any more."

### EXPOSING THE BEHAVIOUR

As with most things in life, it comes down to choice. If a child is asked to do something they simply don't want to do, they can agree to do what is asked of them, walk away from it or stand their ground and say no.

If a child learns to think things through and look ahead at the consequences of their actions, that can often add weight to their decision and they might just change their mind. Sharry says that if the child isn't quite old enough to do this, parents can lend a helping hand.

"For example, I might say to one of the kids in class, 'If you choose to sit beside James and you choose to follow him, then you'll choose to see me at big lunch to talk about that.' Choice is a powerful motivator," she says.

Another thing to watch for is kids cleverly and cheerfully blaming others for their actions, under the guise of peer pressure. Sharry has witnessed some giggle-evoking examples. "One child hit another in the stomach and I asked him why. He said another boy was practising mind control, got into his brain and made him do it," she says.

Although situations like these might seem funny, Sharry is quick to point out that, if children aren't managing peer pressure, parents and schools need to step in and intervene. "When you expose negative peer pressure for what it is, it really does begin to look ugly," she says.

### BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

One of the key things parents can do for their child to help resist negative peer pressure is to work to build a strong bond with their child. The more parents build resilient parent-child relationships by keeping the lines of communication open, the more they'll have a positive influence on their actions and behaviours.

No matter how busy your day-to-day demands are, Cann says it's crucial to make time to talk to your child. "Find time to connect with them in



## PARENTING

### PEER INFLUENCE

meaningful ways — and always try to support them with empathy, warmth and understanding,” he says.

#### WALK THE TALK

If you are struggling to come to grips with your child’s attitude towards peer pressure, it could be worth doing a little soul searching to see how much you’re swayed by peer pressure. Are you the first in line to buy the latest techno gadget? Do you join the fray copying a hot new celebrity or popular style? Do you reach for your phone to check what’s trending on Twitter before you’ve had your morning coffee? (Be honest!)

Nurturing the spirit of individuality in your child sets them free to be their true self. Individuality is to be embraced and celebrated, and it all starts with your attitude and values. If you can walk away from peer pressure and dance to the beat of your own drum, chances are your child will learn that it’s OK to follow their own path and honour their inner wisdom.

#### THE FRIENDSHIP FACTOR

One of the biggest peer pressure influences is a child’s friendship or immediate peer group. Get to know your child’s friends and spend time with them, too, where possible. For young children, it’s a good idea to take note how your child’s friends relate to each other and to your child, and intervene only if your child is struggling to deal with peer-pressure situations. Letting them fight their own battles and stand on their own two feet helps to build their self-esteem.

Have conversations with your child about friendship with others. Organise play dates with other kids to expand your child’s social network so they learn to interact with different personality types.

For older children, if you have doubts about one of your child’s friends, don’t openly criticise them. Ask your child what they like about the child, what attracts them to the other person or why they think the other person makes a good friend.

Once again, says Sharry, it is a matter of choice. “I tell children that they either learn to be a leader or, if they’re going to be a follower, to stand behind a great leader,” she says.

As children get into their pre-teen and teenage years the dynamic shifts: children test their independence (and parental sanity) as they are exposed to an increasing variety of temptations. Cann suggests that, while parents can’t (and shouldn’t) prevent teens from developing a sense of autonomy, where possible it’s



**FOMO (fear of missing out):** a sense of anxiety that you aren’t doing the same as your peer groups.

helpful to encourage children to interact with their peers in supervised settings, such as sporting groups and youth clubs. “There is definitely an association with unsupervised ‘street time’ that correlates with kids getting themselves into trouble,” he says.

#### BOOSTING SELF-ESTEEM

One of the best ways parents can enable their child to honour their individuality is to build their self-esteem. Children who have a strong sense of self are less likely to give in to peer pressure. They learn to trust their own instincts and know their intrinsic value is not dependent on others’ opinions of them.

Look for opportunities to offer genuine praise, but don’t over-praise them or you run the risk of nurturing an overinflated ego. Kids need to be resilient, to learn to take risks and to weigh up facts and make decisions that might not have the outcome they’d hoped for; that’s part of life. Boosting your child’s self-esteem is about showing them love, respect and honesty.

#### LOOK FOR THE LAUGHTER

You can find humour in just about any situation and peer pressure is no exception. In fact, Sharry says a little humour can go a long way to defuse a potentially uncomfortable situation when a child is saying no to peer pressure. She empowers her groups of primary-aged children with the following if they are being unfairly pressured.

Put your hand up in a stop sign (not in the other person’s face), then say, “Talk to the hand, the face ain’t home, please leave a message after the tone. ... Beep.” You’ll probably find the kids involved dissolve into giggles. “A little bit of humour when someone is trying to pressure a child can’t hurt. It tells the other child you aren’t playing their game,” she says.

#### BEATING THE PACK MENTALITY

It’s just one little word but, for many kids, saying no to friends when asked to do something (particularly if the cool or popular kids are doing it) is about as appealing as spending Saturday cleaning out their sock drawer.

Here’s what to teach your kids to help them out:

##### How to say NO!

**1** Don’t rush. Take your time before making a decision. Count to 10, count your fingers and toes, so you aren’t immediately agreeing to what the group or your friend is asking you to do.

**2** Listen to what your tummy is telling you. Do you feel squeamish or uncomfortable? If you do, chances are you should be saying no.

**3** Think about what is being asked of you and the consequences if you say yes. Sure, it might seem pretty funny if you hide the new kid’s lunchbox, but you won’t be laughing if you get caught and spend your lunchtime picking up papers in the schoolyard.

**4** Choose your words. It’s OK to say “No, that’s a mean thing to do” or “I don’t want to do that”.

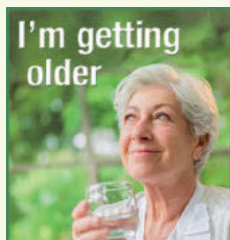
**5** Suggest something else. Why not say to your friend, “How about we ask the new kid to hang out with us at lunchtime? That might be fun.” What is the worst thing that could happen? You might just make a new friend.

#### CAUSE FOR CONCERN

If there are unexplained changes in your child’s behaviour, avoidance of social situations, withdrawn or secretive behaviour or a drop in academic performance, it may be the result of negative peer actions, so get involved immediately. Talk to your school or counsellor for further advice. 🌊

*Carrol Baker is a freelance journalist who writes for lifestyle and health magazines across Australia.*



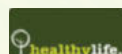


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# An ADVENTURE or NOTHING







Giving your kids more freedom, embracing challenging situations and perhaps allowing your home to be a little less clean than normal could improve the wellbeing of you and your family. WORDS / KIM FORRESTER



Over the past 20 years, the media's obsession with sensationalism, coupled with society's deep-set attachment to fear, has skewed our perception of safety. It has changed the way we interact with our world and removed us further from our most fundamental instincts. Slowly, over time, we have divorced ourselves from our natural urges: to explore, experience and achieve. Instead, we are encouraged to create sterile homes, protect our children from all physical and psychological pain and avoid unpleasantness at all costs.

But is this need for constant protection actually necessary and, more importantly, is it good for your ultimate wellbeing?

#### THE CHICKEN LITTLE COMPLEX

The world is a scary place and we are all in grave danger. At least, that's what the evening news would have you believe. Sadly, many people have adopted this untruth as their daily mantra and live life in an exaggerated state of anxiety. It seems that as the world has become safer, healthier and more tolerable, we as a society have fabricated more reasons to be frightened.

The fact is you live in a society that is more pleasant than it has ever been. Infectious diseases have almost been eradicated from Australia and the average life expectancy has climbed to just under 82 years of age. You are safer on the roads now than you were in the 1990s, with fewer vehicle fatalities, and the crime rate (including homicides and abductions) has remained steady, or in some cases dropped, in the past two decades. Even local terrorism — a favourite topic of the modern doomsayers — was more prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s than it has been in recent years.

Poverty is at a historical low, government is stable and air quality is substantially better than in other developed countries. In many respects, Australia is the lucky country and is only getting luckier!

However, in contrast to this increasingly pleasant existence, the





restriction, regulation and sterilisation of your life has become more invasive and more intensive. It's your children, in particular, who seem to be monitored, safeguarded and preserved more than any generation before them. And the effects of such overbearing protection are beginning to emerge.

School classrooms and playgrounds have become regulated with military rigour to suppress risky or aggressive behaviour, but a British study indicates that the real cause of bullying may have roots in the home, with bully victims more likely than not to have overprotective parents.

Many competitive sports have done away with scorecards for fear of causing angst in a losing child; however, experts maintain that this practice is undermining the child's ability to develop a sense of agency — the sense that they have the power to affect a circumstance through effort.

Childhood obesity continues to soar as statistics show that 63 per cent of students are personally driven to and from the school gate, in stark contrast to 16 per cent in the 1970s.

In the home, the number of antibacterial products ideal for hospital-grade sterilisation has skyrocketed from a few dozen products in the mid-1990s to more than 700 today. This trend has health authorities concerned, with many government agencies pleading for the return to standard soaps and detergents in residential circumstances. It seems that our excessive cleaning habits are contributing to the rise of more dangerous bacteria and an increase in childhood allergies.

In effect, the emphasis on protection is creating just as many problems as it is alleviating and society is no less challenging than it was 20 years ago. In fact, today's society may be causing more harm than we realise due to one vital factor: in the quest for a pain-free, risk-free and germ-free existence, we seem to have taken all the fun and adventure out of life.

### TEACH THE CHILDREN WELL

Bruce McLachlan is the principal of Swanson School, a government primary school situated in the western suburbs of Auckland, New Zealand. "Over the years, we have moved away from the idea of letting children learn how to mitigate risk. Perhaps we were never aware of it at the time but, when we let children play freely, they were learning risk management," McLachlan remarks.



**"Our playground is not segregated, so the young kids are playing among the bigger, boisterous ones. But if a younger student gets hurt the older children will step in to help them."**

Swanson School, under McLachlan's guidance, has been undergoing a radical change in playground etiquette since 2012. As part of a university study on childhood obesity and bullying, McLachlan was tasked with making a change to the school playground so that any effects — positive or negative — could be observed. After serious consideration and research, McLachlan decided to make one simple adjustment at his school. "We stopped saying no," he explains.

The change was not announced in any way. Rather, on the instruction of McLachlan, teachers simply began to turn a blind eye to any playground behaviour as long as it met two important criteria: the child was not hurting someone else and the child was not damaging someone else's property.

What transpired was a gradual transition from a regulated, restricted playground into an unhindered display of childhood exuberance and creativity. Today, children are free to ride scooters and bikes, climb trees, roll in tractor tyres and construct various dwellings and contraptions using the "spare parts pit": a mish-mash of timber, fire hoses and other miscellaneous materials.

"When you look at our playground it can look chaotic and, at times, messy," McLachlan admits.

However, according to McLachlan, the results of this free play have been overwhelmingly positive, in terms of both the wellbeing and the maturity of the students.

"We actually have fewer reported injuries," he states. "One of the reasons we think this has happened is because the children don't want to interrupt their play. Children are still getting hurt, but they are learning how to manage that hurt themselves. They are learning that a little bit of hurt is actually OK and that they can get up and get on with things without the need for constant adult intervention and reassurance."

In addition, the children have become more co-operative and team-focused, bullying has all but disappeared and the students have developed a stronger sense of compassion. "Our playground is not segregated, so the young kids are playing among the bigger, boisterous ones. But what we have found is that if a younger student gets hurt the older children will step in to help them," McLachlan explains.

In the classroom, the effects of this free play are also evident. Children have become more settled, more co-operative, more creative and better problem-solvers. "Not only are they learning about risk when doing free play, they are learning how to do things differently. You often overhear the children working together as they are building and creating, and coming up with new ideas," McLachlan says.

"Children are not setting out to hurt themselves," he adds. "They are actually setting out to achieve something. And, in the process of achieving something, they are learning how to manage their risk and how to do things they couldn't do before."

### IN PURSUIT OF FANTASY

US human behaviour specialist Dr John Demartini is not surprised by the results from the Swanson School initiative. "Many people would equate freedom with children running around like wild animals," he explains. "What we are talking about is children who are free to do what inspires them."

Demartini has spent over 40 years researching and teaching about philosophy and the principles of human behaviour. He believes that the recent obsession with protection and sanitation is based on part fantasy. "People



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perceive more harm than is actually realistic. Many people these days are addicted to fantasy," he says.

According to Demartini, this fantasy has its roots in the Hedonistic and Utilitarian movements of the 17th and 18th centuries — ideals that are based on the principles of continuous happiness, safety and security. However, Demartini maintains that the quest for a utopian society can actually undermine human development.

"We are wise to learn to embrace both sides of life: support and challenge," he advises. "People have to have challenge to facilitate the birth of innovation, creation and opportunity. Over-protection creates juvenile dependence; too much challenge creates precocious independence. But a lovely balance of both support and challenge gives rise to maximum growth and development."

This inherent need for challenge includes the experience of both physical and emotional pain, Demartini says. "We wouldn't have pain endings at the end of our fingers if pain wasn't necessary. Pain is our feedback mechanism. By nature, you have a need for pain, discomfort and things that challenge you. It makes up half of learning."

For Demartini, the answer to a fulfilled life does not lie in eliminating all pain and discomfort. In fact, he believes that wherever we attempt to suppress challenge we will create equal challenge in another area of our lives — a principle that's already playing out in society, as mentioned above. Instead, Demartini suggests you can teach yourself, and your children, how to embrace challenge; how to love and embrace painful experiences and to appreciate the support and growth they facilitate.

"With children, it's about self-governance; if they don't have self-governance, then they need outer governance," he says. "Self-governance only comes from acknowledging both sides of life: pleasure and pain, challenge and support."

As for today's children, Demartini suggests that instead of constant supervision and radical protection they should be encouraged to acknowledge pain and discomfort and be given opportunities to explore challenging situations. "It is wise to teach children to go after challenges that inspire them," he advises. "If they don't seek out or create challenges that they are inspired by, they will keep running into



**"It is wise to teach children to go after challenges that inspire them. If they don't, they will keep running into and experiencing other challenges in their life that are uninspiring."**

and experiencing other challenges in their lives that are uninspiring."

### AN ADVENTURE OR NOTHING

Over a hundred thousand years ago, a small band of humans began a perilous migration out of Africa. In the millennia that followed, this group of nomadic adventurers overcame harsh landscapes, stealthy predators and constantly changing climates to become one of the most prolific species on Earth.

It is easy to imagine that, at times, early humans were confronted with almost insurmountable challenges. However, these early societies continued to thrive, not by controlling their surroundings and eliminating risk but by working with and understanding their environments and adapting their behaviour through trial and error. Drawing on their increasing intelligence and their natural instincts, early humans learned how to accept risk and turn it to their greatest advantage.

Today, with our comfortable homes and expanding technology, it's easy to see ourselves as somehow separate from, and above, the natural instincts of other creatures. However, the truth is that inside us we are still driven by the same fundamental impulses as our ancestors. At your core, you are not

different from the bold, early humans who first ventured out of East Africa.

Human society has become what it is today — prolific, intelligent and creative — because of the innate human need to explore, innovate, challenge, understand and, ultimately, evolve. You are not designed to be safe or sedentary. You are designed to overcome; to learn, experience, attempt, fail, strive and achieve. As Helen Keller once said, "Life is an adventure, or nothing."

When a society and its parents become invasively protective, the implications for wellbeing, although not always instantly apparent, are profound. Confidence, drive, desire and purpose are fundamental ingredients in living a fulfilled life. However, it's impossible to obtain any of these elements without also confronting risk, challenge or danger ... or, perhaps more importantly, being able to accurately and intuitively evaluate risk and danger when it presents itself.

Therefore, it is perhaps time to review your relationship with fear, pain and challenge. It is time to regain a society where children are not only loved and safeguarded but also encouraged to explore their limitations, respect their own personal and physical boundaries and take calculated risks. It is time to once again enjoy life as it is meant to be lived: with a hunger for experience and a thirst for adventure. 🌱

*Kim Forrester is an intuitive consultant, writer and free-range parent to two spirited children. Her work involves blending real, measurable and factual scientific findings with traditional understandings to provide spiritual education that makes sense in the modern day. She has appeared in media throughout Australia and the US and is currently completing her first book, a scientific exploration of real-life psychic insights and inspiration. W: kimforrester.net*



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# Music of TRANSFORMATION

A prominent South African neurosurgeon has made his family farm a place of psychic, emotional and cultural healing from the deep scarring of the long, dark years of Apartheid.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY / LINDA VERGNANI

**I**f you ask the people what transformed them, they say what transformed them is music," says leading South African neurosurgeon Professor Mark Solms. Author of the bestselling book *The Brain and the Inner World*, this exuberant academic is sitting outside the restaurant on his old Cape Dutch wine farm, Solms-Delta. A beaming waitress brings hot chocolate, while guinea fowl chirr in the surrounding vineyards and the mists part briefly to show snow-tipped peaks.

But this seemingly blissful farm, in Franschhoek near Cape Town, hides an excruciating past of slavery, Apartheid and oppression. Solms, once named International Psychiatrist of the Year, is relating how after he took over the farm in 2001 he had to draw on his medical training to start uncovering and healing the deep psychological and social scarring his employees had suffered.

His remedy was an extraordinary scheme to bring about post-Apartheid transformation, which resulted in his workers getting one-third ownership in the farm. He also collaborated with experts and his employees to establish an indigenous food garden, promote authentic Cape cuisine, revive folk music and encourage traditional instrument making.

Brilliant, intense and highly personable, Solms looks more like a rugby player than an academic. His family has farmed in South Africa for six generations, but Solms followed a different path. After medical school during the final years of Apartheid in the 1980s, he worked as a neurosurgeon at Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto, operating on people shot and injured by the army and police. To escape being conscripted into the army, he left the country. "Well, the thought of

going from caring for the victims of the violence to perpetrating the violence was unthinkable."

He has had a meteoric career and is still honorary lecturer in Neurosurgery at St Bartholomew's and the Royal London School of Medicine and director of the Neuropsychanalysis Center of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. He returned to South Africa in 2001, "terribly homesick" after years in exile.

## DIGGING INTO THE PAST

Appointed Professor of Neuropsychology at the University of Cape Town, Solms wanted to play a part in transforming his homeland. His family had bought a share in Delta farm three generations back but never lived there. The farm was under another owner and almost bankrupt when Solms bought out the creditors.

To his dismay, he discovered the farm workers were "living like animals". Six of the seven extended families were crammed into the old wine cellar. "They had no hot water, no electricity. This place was a cesspit. Here where we are sitting was a stinking French drain."

Solms called meetings with each of his workers and their families, explained that he intended to transform the farm and asked for their ideas. Instead of responding, they looked at the floor or each other. "They were intimidated, they were daunted, they were confused — it was excruciating. There was no possibility of having a conversation about anything."

He explains he wanted to "miracle away the past", tell them he was a good white person — unlike his predecessors — so let's plan a bright future together. What they saw was another white farmer whom they did not trust, who scared them and who was "talking some bullshit".

Later, realising he was serious, his employees took advantage of Solms. They began arriving late for work and chopping down beautiful camphor trees for firewood. "My neighbours were also telling me, 'You don't understand. These people are like that. They're lazy and you can't trust them.'" Some right-wing farmers urged him not to improve housing for his employees because under new legislation he would have to give them equivalent houses if he ever evicted them from the farm.

In desperation, Solms decided to take a case history of the place so he could diagnose what was wrong. "It's not that I thought the farm workers were the patient and I was the doctor. The whole place was the patient. The social fabric was the patient and the farmer is central to what's ailing the social fabric of farms."

He employed archaeologists to dig for traces of the earliest inhabitants of the area and historians to find out about what had happened at the farm, previously known as Zandvliet, in the 300 years since it was established.

Their findings are now housed in the Museum van de Caab, which has individual plaques commemorating each of the 200 slaves once kept captive on the farm. The artefacts displayed include Stone Age tools left by San (bushmen), who once lived in the fertile valley, and 2000-year-old pottery shards from Khoi herders. The exhibits include details of each of the European farm owners and first-hand accounts of what happened in the Apartheid years and beyond.

In their oral histories the farm workers recalled the thrill of getting their first pair of shoes when they were 10 or 12 years old. "They said they used to put their feet in the cow shit in winter to keep them warm," says Solms. "Can you imagine that?"





Many employees were taken out of school when their parents became ill or infirm so they could work for the farmer and prevent the family being evicted from their accommodation.

### MY PEOPLE WERE HERE FIRST

Solms could now understand the fatalism of his employees. They felt powerless to plan for the future because their entire family and community culture was “shaped by Apartheid and, behind that, nearly 200 years of slavery and, behind that, the dispossession and genocide”.

Some were ashamed of their heritage until the archaeologists explained what they were finding. Farm worker Bennie Daniels was helping the archaeologists when they dug up “incredibly beautiful” microlithic Stone Age tools from a 6000-year-old settlement site just 50



From top: Sanna Malgas strums tunes on a tin-can guitar; Malgas with Professor Mark Solms; garden manager Johan O'Rayn shows off some impressive melons.

**“It’s not that I thought the farm workers were the patient and I was the doctor. The whole place was the patient. The social fabric was the patient and the farmer is central to what’s ailing the social fabric of farms.”**

metres from the front door of the historic home where Solms and his family live.

Holding up a tiny stone blade, Daniels looked Solms in the eye and said, “You see, professor. My people were here before yours.”

Solms realised that what needed treating was the taking of land and of people and brutalising them in this way. “Now, how are you going to fix it?” he asked himself. He thought of donating the farm to the workers in recompense. “I realised the truth was I didn’t want to give it back. I love it too much.”

Instead, he and his close friend and neighbour British philanthropist Richard Astor decided to help the workers to buy their own farm. Solms and Astor put up their two farms as surety for a bank loan to buy a third farm for the impoverished workers. The new farm is held by the Wijn de Caab Trust, established in 2005 to address the social and economic inequalities of farm residents and other employees at Solms-Delta.





The trust's beneficiaries are all those who lived and worked on the three farms and were "disadvantaged by Apartheid". Through the trust, around 200 residents were given one-third ownership of the land and a third of the profits. Solms adds, "Actually, as it happens, all the profits, because Richard and I don't need the profits."

### WE CHANGED THE WHOLE FARM

The trust has used the money to build houses for the employees, pay for private healthcare, set up a pre-school, fund all levels of education and assist those in distress. "All these kids who were just being educated for farm work, they can do whatever they like," says Solms.

The trust also funds sporting and cultural activities, including four farm bands. Solms says the residents now take great pride in their traditional cuisine and music and, astonishingly, in their shared Afrikaans language, once regarded as the preserve of white Apartheid supporters.

**Mark says the residents now take great pride in their traditional cuisine and music and, astonishingly, in their shared Afrikaans language, once regarded as the preserve of white Apartheid supporters.**

Built to attract more tourists, the farm restaurant, Fyndraai, offers a delicious new take on traditional Khoi, Afrikaner farmer and Cape Malay cuisines. The menu includes dishes like *bobotie* spring rolls with pickled *spekboom* (bacon tree), salad and fruit *blatjang* (chutney) and rooibos panna cotta.

Taking me around the indigenous *fynbos* (fine bush) and *rhenosterbos* (rhino bush) food garden, which was started to supply the restaurant with ingredients, genial garden manager Johan O'Rayn tells me, "We changed the whole farm."

"When Mark bought the farm and said, 'Let's do some changes', we decided what programs to have on the farm so we could share." They reintroduced grapes and in 2005 started producing the first wines. They also offered new job opportunities and training to employees. O'Rayn, who was



previously a security guard, was offered a role as a tour guide in the museum and later got involved in the garden project.

Cookbook author Renata Coetzee, an expert on South African culinary traditions, drew up a list of plants that had once grown in the area and had been used by indigenous people. O'Rayn learned more about botany from an ethnobotanist, hired to collect many of the 400 species of herbs and food plants from the bush and other farms.

In the centre of the sun-shaped garden with its radiating paths, O'Rayn shows me rows of harvested indigenous melons. He explains the watermelon-sized *makataans* are used for jam while the small, bitter *tsama* melons are still a source of water for San people, from whom he is descended. He squeezes purple juice from wild olives, used as black paint in ancient rock art, offers me fingernail-sized wild figs to taste and shows me glistening red tortoise berries.

### NOW I'M IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Sanna Malgas, a former domestic worker who is now involved in the farm's Cape Music Project, says, "Everyone has got a better living on the farm." For this middle-aged woman, who was taken out of school in the "eviction years", the biggest difference is education and opportunities. "When Mark sees you want an opportunity, he makes it for you."

Malgas's opportunity arose out of music research done for the museum. A musicologist was commissioned to record the remaining folk music, which developed in the time of slavery.

The musicologist interviewed an elderly alcoholic, Hannes Floors, who said he knew the traditional songs but complained the strings on his homemade guitar had broken in 1973. The expert restrung his guitar and

filmed Hannes as he began singing the old songs. Mrs Floors came out to dance and the fascinated kids who gathered to watch later asked Hannes to teach them to play the guitar.

Soon the workers formed the Delta Optel folk band to play the "old songs", which were then popularised on the community radio station. There are now four bands on the farm, including an 80-strong marching brass band.

Malgas takes me to a whitewashed building and opens a room filled with different traditional instruments, including "bull roarers" and seed rattles, and homemade instruments like *blik* (tin can) guitars. "We make all these instruments with our hands," she says, playing a few tunes.

"I was growing up with all these instruments as a child. I never think that I could end up on a farm that will tell the history of the Khoisan [Khoi and San] and the bushmen. I am so happy that, though my father and mother are gone, the tradition is still living on this farm."

She paid little attention when her grandmother told her how her ancestors used stone tools to cut things. But when the archaeologists uncovered the ancient tools, Malgas says, "I was jumping around and feeling in my heart: 'Now I'm in the right place.' It was like a tape recorder in my head of what my grandmother said about the Khoisan, but we never believed what she was telling."

"It takes me back to where I came from. I feel I'm at my home. I am looking forward to working in the music museum and I want to take this further. I want to go forward. I respect this whole farm for bringing my heritage back. I'm feeling this form of joy. This is what I want to see growing and not dying." 🍌

*Linda Vergnani is an editor and award-winning freelance journalist. W: lindavergnani.com*



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# *Kakadu dreaming*

The famed Kakadu National Park in Australia's far north offers a richness of wildlife, landscapes and Aboriginal culture, ripe for wide-eyed discovery.

WORDS / CATHERINE LAWSON PHOTOGRAPHY / DAVID BRISTOW

**A**t Yellow Water at first light, I stretch in the cool of pandanus palms, resting my gaze on an enormous crocodile lazing a safe distance below on the billabong's edge. It's Gurrung season in Kakadu National Park, the hot, dry pause between winter and the wet, when ever-shrinking wetlands bring the north's abundant wildlife into clear view.

As glossy jabirus line up alongside elegant egrets patrolling the shallows, great flocks of magpie geese circle overhead and, beyond, on distant

floodplains, brolgas, brumbies and buffalo graze. This wondrous scene pulls at my attention, which eventually returns to that solitary saltie on the mudflats, waiting patiently for the sun.

Startling me with kaleidoscopic natural scenes, Kakadu's 20,000 square kilometres of sandstone escarpments, swamps, savannah woodlands and wetlands support a stunning diversity of plant and animal life, unseen elsewhere in the country. But what boggles the mind is all the ways you can experience Australia's largest and best-known national park, packing my

itinerary with bushwalks, boat cruises and 4WD adventures.

There's thousand-year-old rock art to discover, hidden plunge pools atop sheer-drop waterfalls and great opportunities to delve into the culture of Kakadu's traditional owners, the Bininj/Mungguy, whose deep, spiritual connection to this region dates back 50,000 years.

## **PAINTING THE SCENE**

Around 5000 Aboriginal cultural sites have been identified in Kakadu National Park, its outdoor canvases crowded





Around 5000 Aboriginal cultural sites, such as this one, have been identified in Kakadu. Right: The figure of Nabulwinjbulwinj adorns Anbangbang Gallery at Nourlangie Rock.



About 70km away, where the East Alligator River snakes a boundary between Kakadu National Park and Arnhem Land, I'm lured to Ubirr's famous cluster of rock shelters and overhangs that harbour some of the finest and best-preserved art in the park. Timeframes overlap here: from the Contact Art depiction of a pipe-smoking white fella with his hands in his trousers, probably an 1880s-era buffalo hunter, to the Freshwater Period's X-ray style paintings of barramundi, catfish, goanna, turtles and wallabies painted up to 1500 years ago, and the simple red ochre thylacine (Tasmanian tiger), still vivid thousands of years after its extinction from the Australian mainland.

Down by the river where 4WD vehicles stir up the turbid water at Cahills Crossing, Ubirr's bush-tucker rock art comes to life and I watch a dozen enormous estuarine crocodiles slithering down the sunny banks to snap at unsuspecting barramundi. Tourists and locals alike stop to stare and anglers join the action, too, casting lines and creating a mad scene as they compete with the crocs for their share of the East Alligator's bounty.

Upstream, where tourists board Guluyambi boat cruises to escape the midday heat, the Bardedjilidji Sandstone Walk weaves past dramatically sculpted 1500-million-year-old sandstone outliers, caves and cliffs. Setting out along what easily rates as one of Kakadu's most fascinating short walks, I listen for the whir of chestnut-quilled rock pigeons taking flight, a species endemic

with one of the highest concentrations of rock art in the world. Popular galleries at Ubirr and Nourlangie Rock are the easiest to access, particularly Anbangbang Gallery at the base of Nourlangie Rock.

Dominating this gallery are the famous, much-photographed figures of Namarrgon the Lightning Man and Nabulwinjbulwinj, a dangerous spirit who eats females after striking them with a yam. Badmardi elder Nayombolmi (known as Barramundi Charlie) repainted both artworks in 1964 as they were deemed to be at risk of fading away.

I join a free walking tour that follows a 1.5km-long circuit trail around Anbangbang at a leisurely pace, led by a park ranger whose insight helps interpret the mythical creation scenes before me. Afterwards, with sunset approaching, I scale the enormous granite slabs that lead to nearby Nawurlandja Lookout to watch the northern sun's seductive play of light across the landscape. As I tune into the pulse of the bush below, it's impossible to ignore the immense energy of this deeply meditative place, resonating off Nourlangie's sheer escarpment.



Clockwise from main:  
Sunset over Yellow  
Water Billabong;  
Indigenous custodians  
have a deeply  
spiritual connection  
to Kakadu; there's  
a stunning natural  
diversity in Australia's  
largest national park;  
lotus flowers bloom  
on the billabongs; the  
north's apex predator.

to the park, and crane my neck to discover remarkable rock art adorning impossibly high walls.

Collectively, Kakadu's rock-art galleries represent one of the longest historical records of any people anywhere in the world. For visitors, their presence transforms Kakadu's extraordinary wild places into sacred ground, amplifying each day's discoveries and arousing curiosity in the region's ancient, still-thriving traditional Indigenous culture.

### EXPANDING HORIZONS

Whatever brings you to Kakadu, be it wildlife watching, bushwalking, fishing or four-wheel driving, there's a long list of Indigenous-led tours to pack out your holiday itinerary.

You could spend a morning trekking with a traditional owner, gathering bush tucker and plant medicines before learning how to prepare a ground-oven feast. There are sunset boat cruises, overnight campouts and scenic flights that reveal new perspectives on the park, while interpretive displays at Bowali Visitor Centre and the excellent Warradjan

---

**A quarter of Australia's freshwater and estuarine fish species inhabit Kakadu, which also provides refuge for rare and endemic creatures, over 2000 plant species and a third of the country's bird species.**

---

Aboriginal Cultural Centre help synthesise your Kakadu experience.

Then there are the festivals.

In Kakadu's northeast we join Jabiru locals celebrating the Mahbilil Festival: harvest time for the magpie geese that have grown fat and heavy on the oily bulbs of *eleocharis* grass. Here I meet Fred Hunter from Kakadu Culture Camp as he carefully prepares the festival feast, a traditional ground oven packed tight with big chunks of bright red buffalo meat, two whole plucked magpie geese, countless parcels of sweet potato and, on top, layers of paperbark and melaleuca leaves for flavouring.

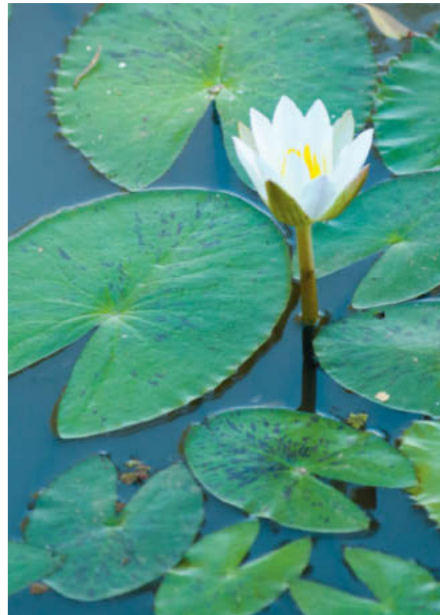
In filling the pit with soil, Hunter takes great care to cover the holes where smoke is rising, ensuring the meat will be perfectly steamed after five hours underground. "I've eaten buffalo and geese all my life," he tells me. "It's

a good way to cook for a lot of people. It's good tucker, mate."

Having just spent the morning spotting magpie geese with my binoculars, I take my vegetarian tastebuds to the juice bar and, afterwards, giggle at the dozens of kids — all shades of skin colour — throwing and retrieving their wayward boomerangs and stick spears from the long grass. As I breeze around the market stalls, I see fellow travellers sitting cross-legged alongside Indigenous women who patiently share the secrets of their weaving expertise while, metres away, a pint-sized hip-hop singer is belting out beats from a stage.

When Mahbilil's lively and laidback festival winds down, I retreat to Kakadu's less-travelled southern fringe in search of solitude and some starry, starry nights.





## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### ■ Escape routes

Most travellers visit Kakadu during the cool, dry season (April to September). Adults pay AU\$25 park entry fee (kids under 16 years and NT residents are free). To find out touring information, visit [parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu](http://parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu).

### ■ Be crocwise

Saltwater or estuarine crocodiles are found in waterways throughout Kakadu National Park. Two deadly attacks occurred in 2014 so visitors should be wary, always obey signage posted around waterways and, if in doubt, stay out of the water.

## ABOVE THE FALLS

Bound for Maguk and a secluded bush camp deep within Buladjang, or Sickness Country, I navigate my 4WD 12km off Kakadu Highway along a dusty, corrugated track. At road's end I continue on foot, strolling through monsoon forest beside a cool, sandy creek and leapfrogging over rocky slabs until I reach the deep, rocky waterhole beneath Maguk's ever-flowing falls.

Irresistible and spectacular, this is the hidden oasis I've been told would satisfy all my tropical dreams — and, thankfully, it's crocodile-free. I plunge straight in, paddling across the pool to float under the fall's invigorating flow, then hauling out to warm up on hot rock slabs. Swimmers splashing about high above lure me up a rocky trail that in 10 minutes elevates me above the falls to where a cool cascade fills a string of bubbling spas.

Exploring upstream, I swim through a narrow rock chasm and discover the solitude I need, floating motionless, eyes closed, face warmed by the sun, my feet and hands bumping softly against cold, smooth rock. When the sun disappears from view, I make my

retreat, retracing my steps back to Kakadu Highway and turning south once more for a night camped at Gunlom. Nestled beneath a steep rockface on Waterfall Creek, Gunlom's waterhole is a reliable, year-round swimming spot: deep, icy and easy to reach (no sweaty hike required).

After a sound night's sleep I emerge from my little tent before the sun rises, keen to welcome the day and scale the kilometre-long track that climbs above Gunlom Waterfall. The viewpoint is all my own at this early hour, so I easily dip into a restful state and salute the sun long before it catches up with me. Far below, Gunlom's chilly pool beckons and within minutes I'm floating again, cooling my heels in the waterhole, another full day of Kakadu adventures ahead of me.

## WILDLIFE WATCH

There is so much diversity within Kakadu's immense boundaries that you'd need a month or more of exploring to really map it all out. Between the dry ridges to the south and the tidal mangrove flats at the sea, pockets of monsoon forest surround

waterfalls and creeks, and savannah woodlands of eucalypts and speargrass support Kakadu's greatest variety of flora and fauna.

Lotus flowers bloom on tranquil billabongs, attracting waterbirds and camouflaging the crocodiles that patiently stake out wildlife among the paperbark trunks. A quarter of Australia's freshwater and estuarine fish species inhabit Kakadu, which also provides refuge for rare and endemic creatures, over 2000 plant species and a third of the country's bird species. An abundance of these gather at Yellow Water Billabong where you can take a stroll along elevated boardwalks or watch the natural world at play aboard a guided boat cruise.

Close by, the Indigenous-owned Gagudju Lodge Coinda provides convenient, comfortable rooms, as does the slightly more upmarket Kakadu Crocodile Hotel at Jabiru in the park's north where, if you take them, kids stay and eat for free. To overnight in truly indulgent style you'll need to look outside the park: Wildman Wilderness Lodge and Bamurru Plains offer packages unlikely to disappoint.

To really reconnect with the landscape, you might choose to bed down around a campfire and enjoy the convivial fun of a fully guided camping tour — or throw your own camping kit together, hire a 4WD in Darwin and discover Kakadu in solitude and at your own easy pace. 🌿

*Journalist Catherine Lawson, photographer David Bristow and their three-year-old daughter Maya form an intrepid travel writing team whose first book — Highway One, the Ultimate Australian Road Trip — was published by Australian Geographic in 2012.*





# The Rarotongan way

Cook Islanders have worries just like you and me but the approach to life in this island nation is so very different. We discover you may just be able to bring some of that Cook Islands serenity home with you.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY / MEGAN BLANDFORD





The sun's golden reflection steps from the horizon over the waves to land. There, a couple wanders hand-in-hand. "I'm not happy in my job," she begins. He rubs her arm with his spare hand. "Something has to change," he agrees. They squeeze hands, smile at each other and look over the water in wonder, as though it's only now that they can see the rays beaming over the streaky orange sky.

Conversations like this are common among visitors to Rarotonga. There's something about this place that makes you reflect on life and connect with a deep desire for satisfaction, especially as the sun sets over what feels like the edge of the world. We find ourselves wanting to be better people, living closer to our passions, and taking a piece — peace? — of the Cook Islands home with us.

### COOK ISLANDS CULTURE

On a map, the Cook Islands are the size of a few grains of sand. And, like sand, it is easy to brush away as insignificantly small, yet it's a vital part of the Pacific.

The first Polynesians inhabited the Cook Islands in the ninth century, and there they lived happily — but not ever after. In the 1770s, Captain James Cook happened upon these 15 islands, soon to be grouped together and named for him.

But perhaps the most notable event for the islands since they were first settled came with the arrival of British missionaries around 1873. They changed everything: they converted the islanders to Christianity, outlawed cannibalism and got rid of rituals such as the kava ceremony after being subjected to the narcotic effects of the plant.

All the influences of the missionaries remain to this day ("And that's lucky," one local told me, "otherwise I'd be eating you right now"), although the way tradition combines with this modern life is intriguing. For example, there are still tribes with chief leadership and hereditary hierarchy and land cannot be bought and sold — rather, it can only be passed down through families or leased to outsiders (which explains how resorts and hotels come to be there).

Modern Rarotonga is bustling in its own way. Its main town Avarua is often filled with cars and scooters, especially on Saturday's market day, when music plays and tourists are pulled onstage to self-consciously shake their hips in dancing lessons. People wander around the stalls of fresh fruit, bright sarongs and black pearls, slurping coconut milk

from a straw and taking in the frangipani scent that hangs in the steamy humidity.

The sudden loom of darkness changes the mood. "Batten down the hatches!" jokes a stall holder. "A storm's on its way." The dark grey rolls in over the ocean, rapidly hitting land with fat drops and a crash of waves, and people disperse with squeals, throwing plastic ponchos over themselves in a vain attempt at avoiding the rain's effects. We run to a little cafe to dry off over coffee and indulge in a spot of people-watching.

Five minutes later, the sky is blue once again and it's hot — really hot. All the rain has done is provide further fuel for the humidity's energy, which in turn takes away any verve we may have had earlier. We stay put, swapping over to cold smoothies, and contemplate life on this island where "the girls are pretty and the boys are handsome; that's the Rarotongan way", as their song goes.

While Cook Islanders are known for being funny, easygoing and über-relaxed, it's too simplistic to assume life on Rarotonga is one long summer holiday.

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**Cook Islanders might love a joke and live with less obvious stress than many of us but they approach their jobs, faith and authority with the utmost seriousness.**

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Life here isn't quite as it appears at face value; look a little closer and you'll see these people are just like you and me with daily pressures and challenges.

Things here run on island time. If a shop owner decides not to open that day, then that's that; if the bus is running late, no one's keeping KPI statistics and demanding answers; if you're told you'll be met at midday, what they really mean is "sometime today".

### FOOD, LOVINGLY GROWN & MADE

We do the ultimate tourist thing and book ourselves on a fabricated experience in order to see the "real" Rarotonga: a progressive dinner tour that takes us into local homes to eat homemade food. Once I realise the irony, I feel a bit jaded as our ukulele-playing host serenades us on the minibus, but by the end of the night I'm surprised. It quickly becomes one of the favourite parts of our trip.

Those who were around in the 1960s will remember progressive dinners;

otherwise you may have heard the stories and regard them as retro cool. We're put in a minibus with a dozen strangers and driven to the first house for a seafood entrée. As we're welcomed with a tour of the garden, the realities of island life start to set in as our host points out all the fruit trees and vegetable plants but, when asked about a beautiful flowery tree, simply replies, "That's useless; you can't eat or use anything from it." These are resourceful people with a purpose to everything they do and a determined pride in their land.

The land is the main source of worry at the time I'm visiting — in the middle of a drought. Looking around at the lush plants and recalling the previous day's rain, I query this. "We haven't had much rain in the past few weeks," explains Danny, our host. I look at him — as an Australian, a few weeks of a little rain during summer could be considered normal, if not very wet in some parts of the country. As he explains, there's no freshwater storage, like a dam, on the islands. The Rarotongans rely heavily on the immediacy of their environment and the plants are so used to regular drenchings that crops can be affected by a lack of rain.

On this particular evening, there are no fire pits to cook with and no girls dancing in pearl shell bras: this progressive dinner isn't about tradition or times past. Instead, we're eating tuna in coconut milk, roast chicken, arrowroot chips, salad with papaya dressing, chocolate cake and guava crumble.

The tour's founder, Temu, says, "It's not about having a meal cooked in the *umu* [a traditional underground cooking method] or learning about our history; this is about seeing how Cook Islanders live right now." While the history of the culture is important, it's also vital to see life as it is in the present.

As the evening goes on, with two more typical Rarotongan families to dine with for main course and dessert, we're made to feel truly welcome. My daughter plays with the kids — multiple generations live in each of these houses, as is typical on Rarotonga — with whom she seems to have little in common. Until we realise they have everything in common, as all children do: a need for fun and play and their whole lives ahead of them. We're treated to simple, home-cooked meals, home-grown produce and singing aplenty. One family even puts on a rendition of kids' songs with an islander twist for my delighted daughter, teaching her to play the ukulele as they do so.



From far left: Tropical delights for dessert; Cook Islanders can make anyone feel welcome; a singalong with an islander twist.

It's in these small things that our night begins to feel less like a tour. If my family were to start singing together it would be a comedy of awkwardness; the fact that none of this exists is testament to how organic this experience actually is. And the ability to make 14 strangers feel at home and a welcome part of their households for a night — well, that's a unique skill of all the Cook Islanders.

In our manufactured experience we lift away the layers to see the realness of people who make this island what it is. They share their food and stories and sing with us, and in some ways that's as much as any person can give to another.

### MODERN LIFE

"I'm just cutting a whale's head right now, but come on over," is how my conversation with Nan Hauser starts. I'm at her house five minutes later and, luckily, she's packed the carcass away.

We embark on a discussion about why this Swiss-American islander does what she does: managing a whale and wildlife centre. She tells me about her research, shows videos of her close encounters with the world's largest creatures and then tells me what led her here.

When she first arrived in the Cooks, Nan says, she found the next generation had little knowledge of their environment and how to look after it, which is perhaps surprising given their utter dependence upon it. "They needed to know more about the bigger picture," Nan explains and her audience was, and is, eager and willing to learn. She now goes into local schools to teach the kids about wildlife and environmental issues and it's not uncommon for dozens of those children to explore her whale centre after school.

During my trip I meet more people with this level of passion, many of whom are entrepreneurs running several businesses to take advantage of the all-important tourist dollar. One is Dr Graeme Matheson, the developer of a skincare product called Te Tika. Using the native *kauariki* plant, Dr Matheson —

## EXPERIENCE RAROTONGA

### ■ Getting there

Air New Zealand and Virgin Australia fly from Sydney and Melbourne to Rarotonga. Look out for regular specials, particularly in the off-peak summer months. [airnewzealand.com.au](http://airnewzealand.com.au); [virginaustralia.com](http://virginaustralia.com)

### ■ Staying there

Muri Beach is a beautiful area filled with great eateries. Check out the **Muri Beachcomber** ([beachcomber.co.ck](http://beachcomber.co.ck)) for great self-contained accommodation with family-friendly options. There are heaps of resorts around the island: choose based on your priorities of amazing sunset (west), sunrise (east) or the best beaches (south).

### ■ Getting around

Ride like a local by hiring a

scooter from **Polynesian Rentals** ([polynesianhire.co.ck](http://polynesianhire.co.ck)) or, if you have kids too young to sit behind you, hire a hatchback. Buses circle the main road regularly (on island time), one going clockwise and one anticlockwise.

### ■ What to do

Immerse yourself in Rarotongan life with a progressive dinner tour ([cookislandstours.co.ck](http://cookislandstours.co.ck)) and a visit to the **Punanga Nui Market** in Avarua and take in a cultural tour and show at **Te Vara Nui Village** ([tevaranui.co.ck](http://tevaranui.co.ck)). You can experience the Te Tika products at **Rumours Day Spa** or buy them at the local pharmacy or online at [tetika.com.au](http://tetika.com.au).

### ■ More info

[cookislands.travel](http://cookislands.travel)

with tribal permission — is researching a treatment that regenerates bones. Along the way he found it to be an amazing skincare product, too. Together with his family, who also run a luxury resort, Dr Matheson uses several plantations around the islands to gather the oils that go into his research and the creams and sells the products worldwide.

People like this prove that one of the strengths of Cook Islanders is their resourcefulness; another is their ability to blend modern life and the legacy of their ancestors. When these two great strengths combine, the result is special.

Make no mistake: this is a savvy and hard-working nation. Cook Islanders might love a joke and live with less obvious stress than many of us but they approach their jobs, faith and authority with the utmost seriousness. They work a lot but it seems that work is life and life is work; they do not expect anything else. While we visitors find our time on the islands relaxing, a lot of effort happens behind the scenes to achieve that.

The people you meet in a tourist capacity fulfil the stereotype with over-

enthusiastic greetings of "*Kia orana!*" and personalities larger than life. But get out of the tourist circle and you'll see a more relatable version. While the people we meet don't go so far as to prove stereotypes wrong, they display more humanness: a smile in greeting but no outlandish jokes or cuddles for the baby.

The big difference between the islanders and me — us — has nothing to do with where we live or what we do. It's attitudinal. Upon our return home, the work pressures and school routines hit us like a coconut to the head. But the Cook Islands give you something else. I'm no longer in a tropical paradise but have been reminded that I'm in control of living a life of passion and worth.

Just like that couple on the beach who couldn't see the beauty of the sunrise until they'd moved past their own struggles, sometimes we all need a renewed perspective to see the paradise that our own lives and homes can be. 🌺

■ *The writer travelled courtesy of Cook Islands Tourism.*

*Megan Blandford is a freelance writer and blogger at [writingloud.blogspot.com](http://writingloud.blogspot.com).*



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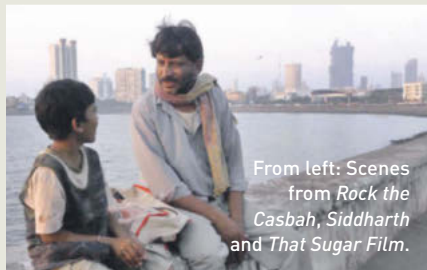
# COUNTER CULTURE

REVIEWS BY HOLLY CUNNEEN, KATE DUNCAN,  
DANIELLE KIRK & CHRIS STAFFORD**DVDS****ROCK THE CASBAH**DIRECTED BY LAÏLA MARRAKCHI  
STARRING MORJANA ALAOUÏ,  
NADINE LABAKI, LUBNA AZABAL**SIDDHARTH**DIRECTED BY RICHIE MEHTA  
STARRING RAJESH TAILANG,  
TANNISHTHA CHATTERJEE**THAT SUGAR FILM**DIRECTED BY DAMON GAMEAU  
STARRING DAMON GAMEAU

As a wealthy family gathers in Tangiers for the funeral of its patriarch, *Rock the Casbah* opens not with the Clash song but with Bob and Bing jauntily warbling “like Webster’s dictionary we’re Morocco bound”. So it’s hardly surprising to be greeted by the deceased (famed Egyptian star Omar Sharif) in his palatial garden, cigar and scotch in hand, smiling toothily in anticipation of the bombshells he left behind to go off at regular intervals over the next 90 minutes.

Like King Lear, he has three squabbling daughters (a fourth has suicided): the straitlaced one (Azabal), the discontented beauty (Labaki) and the youngest (Alaoui), who’s built a Hollywood career playing Muslim terrorists. Meanwhile, their mother (Hiam Abbass) shocks everyone by sacking the family’s devoted housekeeper and nanny. The stage is set for tears, laughs and revelations — not all of them surprising, but enough to gently rock the Casbah.

Touching and beautifully shot, *Siddharth* examines a very different stratum of society. Mahendra (Tailang), a New Delhi street tinker, tries to boost the family income by sending his 12-year-old son to the Punjab to work illegally in a factory. When Siddharth vanishes, a suspected abductee, Mahendra embarks on a seemingly hopeless search in a country

From left: Scenes  
from *Rock the  
Casbah*, *Siddharth*  
and *That Sugar Film*.

of millions where the disappearance of children is an everyday occurrence.

Mahendra can barely work his mobile phone and his wife Suman, in a finely judged performance by the acclaimed Chatterjee, is losing patience with his ineptness as a provider. On his quest, he meets with shrugs from the authorities and kindness from unlikely quarters. Indian-Canadian director Mehta handles this potential tragedy with wit but without sentimentality; the result is another outstanding film from the Subcontinent.

Australian actor Damon Gameau’s *That Sugar Film* is a reminder that, in the fight against obesity, the enemy is sugar, not fat. After three years on a no-added-sugar diet and taking a cue from Morgan Spurlock’s movie about fast food, Gameau sets out to super-size himself by ingesting the average daily intake of sugar — 40 teaspoons (more than four times the recommended amount) — for 60 days. He will do the same amount of exercise and eat as many calories as usual. The catch is he’ll do it not with junk food but with supposedly “healthy” low-fat foods, including yoghurts, muesli bars, cereals and fruit juices. The results will amaze you. In short order, the previously fit and healthy *Underbelly* star runs into trouble with his own underbelly as well as physical lethargy and mood swings.

With its lively mix of computer animation, comedy, expert talking heads and celebrity cameos, *That Sugar Film* is fun but there’s no sugar-coating this pill: obesity kills. **CS**

**THE RELUCTANT PSYCHIC**SUSAN SAXMAN WITH PERDITA FINN,  
MACMILLAN

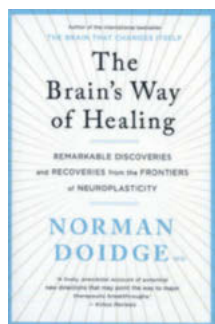
*The Reluctant Psychic* is a compelling memoir from Susan Saxman, a New York-based psychic. She tells a captivating tale of a young woman struggling to accept her extraordinary psychic gifts, and shares with honesty and integrity the challenges she faces during this transformation. Readers (well, this reader at least) can feel her alienation and displacement deeply, making this novel hard to put down. Saxman’s story ends in happiness and joy as she finds her calling bringing comfort to those in need, both living and dead. Even if you don’t believe in the mystical, *The Reluctant Psychic* transports you to another world; eerie at first, but then very real. **KD**

**JUST MERCY**

BRYAN STEVENSON, SCRIBE

*Just Mercy* tells the story of criminal defence attorney Bryan Stevenson, who has worked tirelessly to defend the rights and lives of poor, underprivileged, marginalised people in the US who have been unjustly sentenced to capital punishment. Littered with true cases, Stevenson’s book exposes the gaping divide between law and justice. Yet Walter McMillian’s fight for justice and redemption brings hope and inspires perseverance. His case verged on the absurd but, for convenience’s sake, he was found guilty and put on death row; six years of hard work, determination and appeals later, McMillian was exonerated. Stevenson reveals how much of a difference believing in someone and fighting their cause can make. An incredible story, *Just Mercy* may help fuel the fire on your own journey. **HC**





## THE BRAIN'S WAY OF HEALING

NORMAN DODGE, SCRIBE

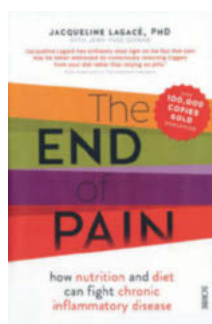
Neuroplasticity, the notion that the brain can change its own structure and function, is fascinating yet hard to fathom. In his new book, Norman Doidge — psychiatrist, researcher and author of the bestseller *The Brain that Changes Itself* — explains how neuroplastic healing works and can improve, or even cure, conditions thought to be irreversible. He introduces doctors and therapists who're healing the brain without surgery or medication and shares stories from patients who claim to have used neuroplastic techniques to treat chronic pain, autism, ADD, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and brain injuries. An examination of how science, medicine, the mind-body connection and the energies around us work together to heal. **KD**



## I WANT TO SLEEP I WANT TO BE CALM

HARRIET GRIFFEY, HARDIE GRANT BOOKS

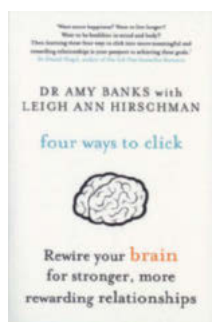
For those of us who prefer to stay away from supplements and medication, *I Want to Sleep* and *I Want to Be Calm* are full of simple yet effective remedies. In our modern lives we tend to overcomplicate things and staying calm and sleeping well are no exceptions. Harriet Griffey's pocket-sized books remind us to pare things back and slow down. Mindfulness — forging a conscious connection between the body and mind — is revisited throughout, yet what sets these books apart is how Griffey's writing clearly explores and explains each concept, making it accessible to everyone, from the ashram fanatic to the beginner yogi. Griffey's books are visually appealing, easy to read and great resources to refer back to. **HC**



## THE END OF PAIN

JACQUELINE LAGACÉ, PHD, WITH JEAN-YVES DIONNE, SCRIBE

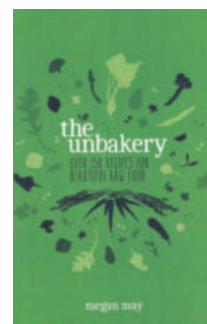
With 25 years' experience as a biomedical researcher specialising in microbiology and immunology, and as a long-time sufferer of severe chronic arthritis, Jacqueline Lagacé is well positioned to write about relieving chronic pain. *The End of Pain* details her discovery, research into and very successful adoption of the hypotoxigenic diet: a regime created by Dr Jean Seignalet, a French expert in nutritional therapy whose life work was relating autoimmune diseases to the modern diet. Lagacé thoroughly explores the science behind treating inflammatory diseases through what you put in your mouth. It's an illuminating read, extremely comprehensive — and practical, too. **DK**



## FOUR WAYS TO CLICK

AMY BANKS WITH LEIGH ANN HIRSCHMAN, ALLEN & UNWIN

This book introduces the scientifically rooted concept that your brain is relational (aka "hardwired for close relationships") and provides a how-to guide in rewiring your brain to create healthier, happier bonds. *Four Ways to Click*, by author and doctor Amy Banks, contains techniques to strengthen the brain's neural pathways to encourage connection, intimacy and healing. Banks shows the importance of understanding moments of isolation when they arise, and how to navigate this tough terrain. With case studies, relational assessments and exercises, *Four Ways to Click* gives you the tools to optimise your brain's natural inclination to connect, accept and be calm. Good for clinicians as well as anybody wishing to create more satisfying relationships. **KD**

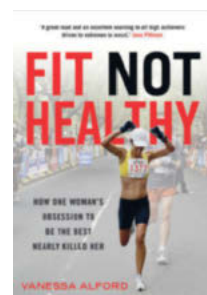


## THE UNBAKERY

MEGAN MAY, MURDOCH BOOKS

Raw foods are big in the wellness world and, while a totally raw-vegan diet may be great for some, we think becoming intuitive to your body's ever-changing needs is most important. As Megan May, chef, founder of Kiwi cafe Little Bird Organics and author of *The Unbakery*, says, "Stressing about every mouthful you eat is a bore, and ironically, quite unhealthy." Instead, she suggests creating a deep connection to your body and its daily nutritional needs. If your inner voice whispers "raw", then May's gorgeous book packed with over 150 raw plant-based recipes is the ideal guide.

If you choose to juice your fruit and veg, Sarah Cadji's beautifully bound book *Pure* has a wealth of cleansing, energising juice and smoothie creations. **KD**



## FIT NOT HEALTHY

VANESSA ALFORD, FINCH PUBLISHING

It's tricky as a non-athlete to understand how a sportsperson's quest to be the best can drive them to extremes. Yet in her memoir *Fit Not Healthy*, Vanessa Alford does her best to explain. She tells in disarming honesty how as a young elite marathon runner she became so obsessed with exercise and extreme dieting that she collapsed after a race. You're there with Alford as she battles internal and external pressures to be leaner and fitter and tries to find a cure for the bewildering array of physical symptoms that arise as her body rebels against her. Fortunately, you also bear witness as Alford redirects her mental strength to recovery and health. Heartbreaking and inspiring, this book is a lesson in maintaining balance. **DK**



## FOOD

THE OH SHE GLOWS COOKBOOK

### MAPLE-CINNAMON APPLE & PEAR BAKED OATMEAL

Serves: 6

2¼ cups gluten-free rolled oats  
 2 tbsp coconut or brown sugar  
 2 tsp ground cinnamon  
 1 tsp baking powder  
 ½ tsp ground ginger  
 ½ tsp fine-grain sea salt  
 ½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg or ¼ tsp ground nutmeg  
 2 cups unsweetened almond milk  
 ½ cup unsweetened apple sauce  
 ¼ cup pure maple syrup  
 2 tsp pure vanilla extract  
 2 apples, peeled & diced  
 1 ripe pear, peeled & diced  
 ½ cup walnuts, chopped (optional)



Preheat the oven to 190°C. Lightly grease a 2–2.5L casserole dish.

In a large bowl, combine the rolled oats, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, ginger, salt and nutmeg. Mix well. In a separate bowl, combine the almond milk, apple sauce, maple syrup and vanilla and stir well to combine.

Pour the liquid mixture over the oat mix and stir until combined. The mixture will have a soupy consistency. Fold in the chopped apples and pear. Spoon the oatmeal mixture into the prepared casserole dish and smooth out the top. Sprinkle the walnuts (if using) on top and gently press them down into the oatmeal with your hands.

Bake, uncovered, for 35–45 minutes, or until the oatmeal is bubbly around the corners and the apples are fork-tender. Cool the oatmeal for 5–10 minutes before serving. Enjoy with a splash of almond milk and a drizzle of maple syrup, if desired.

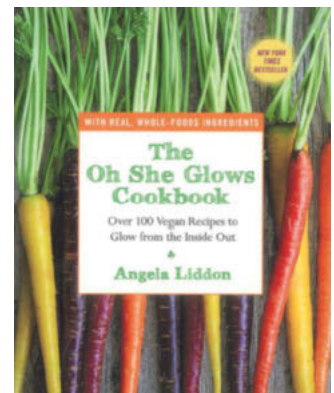
Cool the oatmeal completely before wrapping it up and placing it in an airtight container. It will keep in the fridge for 5–6 days or in the freezer for 2–3 weeks.



## Inner shine

Recipes & images from *The Oh She Glows Cookbook* by Angela Liddon, Penguin Group Australia, RRP AU\$29.99

**Y**ou've heard the phrase "glowing from the inside out", but can this cliché become an achievable state of health? Can your inner landscape be so bright that outwardly you shine, all thanks to food? Yes, it can — and you can, too. Angela Liddon's *The Oh She Glows Cookbook* will illuminate your cells with nourishment, compassion, happiness and healing. This brightly coloured new release contains over 100 plant-based vegan recipes alongside personal stories, nutritional tips, detailed methods and beautiful photography by Liddon herself. The cookbook is an extension of her blog *Oh She Glows*, an online treasure trove of recipes, advice and daily inspiration. Here are some of our favourites, which we're certain will get you glowing.



### EMPOWERED NOODLE BOWL, TWO WAYS: THAI PEANUT & ORANGE-MAPLE MISO

Serves: 4

#### For the Thai peanut sauce:

1 large clove garlic  
 2 tbsp toasted sesame oil  
 3 tbsp smooth peanut or almond butter  
 2 tsp grated fresh ginger (optional)  
 3 tbsp fresh lime juice, plus more as needed  
 2 tbsp plus 1 tsp low-sodium tamari  
 1–2 tsp granulated sugar

#### For the orange-maple miso dressing:

3 tbsp light miso  
 2 tbsp rice vinegar

1 tbsp toasted sesame oil  
 1 tbsp tahini  
 ¼ cup fresh orange juice  
 1 tbsp water  
 1 tsp maple syrup

#### For the salad:

115g gluten-free soba (buckwheat) noodles  
 Extra-virgin olive oil, for the noodles  
 1 bag frozen shelled edamame (soy beans), thawed  
 1 red capsicum, diced  
 ½ seedless (English) cucumber, diced  
 1 carrot, julienned  
 4 shallots, chopped, plus more for serving  
 ¼ cup fresh coriander leaves, chopped  
 Sesame seeds, for serving





To make the Thai peanut sauce, use a mini or regular food processor to combine the garlic, sesame oil, peanut butter, ginger (if using), lime juice, tamari, sugar (if using) and 2–3 tablespoons of water. Process until combined.

To make the orange-maple miso dressing, in a mini or regular food processor combine the miso, vinegar, sesame oil, tahini, orange juice, water and maple syrup and process together until well combined.

To make the salad, cook the soba noodles according to the instructions on the package. Be sure not to overcook them — they should only take 5–9 minutes, depending on the brand. Drain the noodles and rinse them under cold water. Transfer the noodles to a large bowl and toss them with a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil (this prevents the noodles from sticking together).

Add the edamame, capsicum, cucumber, carrot, shallots and coriander to the bowl with the noodles and toss until well combined. Pour your desired amount of the dressing over the salad and toss to coat. (Any leftover dressing will keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week.)

Portion the salad into four bowls and garnish each serving with a sprinkle of sesame seeds and some green onions. Serve any leftover dressing on the side.

## ROASTED RAINBOW CARROTS WITH CUMIN-CORIANDER TAHINI SAUCE

Serves: 4

### For the roasted rainbow carrots:

- 2 bunches rainbow carrots
- 1 tbsp grapeseed oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp fine-grain sea salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp cumin seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp coriander seeds
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp freshly ground black pepper

### For the cumin-coriander tahini sauce:

- 2 tbsp tahini
- 4 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin



- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp ground coriander
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp fine-grain sea salt

Preheat the oven to 220°C. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Trim the stems off the carrots, leaving a couple of inches of the stem intact. Wash the carrots and gently pat them dry. Place the carrots on the prepared baking sheet.

Drizzle the carrots with the oil and roll them on the baking sheet until the oil is evenly dispersed. Sprinkle them with the salt, cumin seed, coriander seed and pepper. Leave 1cm between each carrot.

Roast the carrots for 15–20 minutes, or until they are just fork-tender but still a bit firm. Be sure not to overcook them.

To make the cumin-coriander tahini sauce, in a small bowl, whisk the tahini, lemon juice, oil, cumin, coriander and salt. Plate the carrots and drizzle the sauce on top. Serve any leftover sauce on the side.

## RAW PUMPKIN-MAPLE PIE WITH BAKED OAT CRUST

Serves: 8–14

### For the crust:

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup pitted Medjool or regular dates
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups gluten-free rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup pecans
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp salt
- 3 tbsp coconut oil, room temperature

### For the filling:

- 1 cup raw cashews, soaked
- 1 cup pumpkin purée
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup pure maple syrup
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup coconut oil
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp fine-grain sea salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp freshly grated or pre-ground nutmeg

### To serve:

- Whipped coconut cream, finely chopped pecans or freshly grated nutmeg (all optional)

To make the crust, preheat the oven to 180°C. Lightly grease a 23cm pie dish with coconut oil. If your dates are firm, soak them in water for 30–60 minutes and drain before using.

In a food processor, combine the oats, pecans, cinnamon and salt and process until the mixture has the texture of coarse sand. Add the dates and oil and process again until the mixture comes together. It should stick together when pressed with your fingers. If it's dry, add 1 teaspoon of water and process again.

Sprinkle the crust mixture all over the base of the pie dish. Starting from the middle, press the crumbs firmly and evenly into the dish in an outward direction. The harder you press the crumbs into the dish, the more it will hold together. Push the crust up along the sides of the dish and even out the edge with your fingers. Poke several fork holes in the crust and bake, uncovered, for 10–12 minutes, until lightly golden. Set aside to cool for 30 minutes on a cooling rack.

To make the filling, drain and rinse the cashews. In a high-speed blender, combine the soaked cashews, pumpkin, maple syrup, oil, vanilla, cinnamon, salt, ginger and nutmeg and blend on high until completely smooth. This can take a few minutes, depending on your blender. If your blender needs more liquid to get it going, add 1 tablespoon of almond milk (or a bit more) to help it along. Pour the filling into the semi-cooled crust and smooth out the top.

Carefully cover the dish with foil and place on an even surface in the freezer to chill overnight, or for at least 5–6 hours, until firm.

Remove the pie from the freezer and let it sit on the counter for 10 minutes before slicing. This pie is meant to be served cold and it tastes best served frozen. Serve with homemade whipped coconut cream, finely chopped pecans and freshly grated nutmeg, if desired. 🍌



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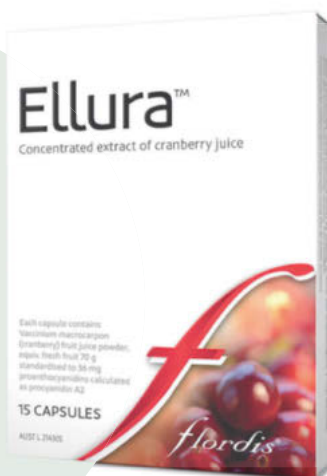
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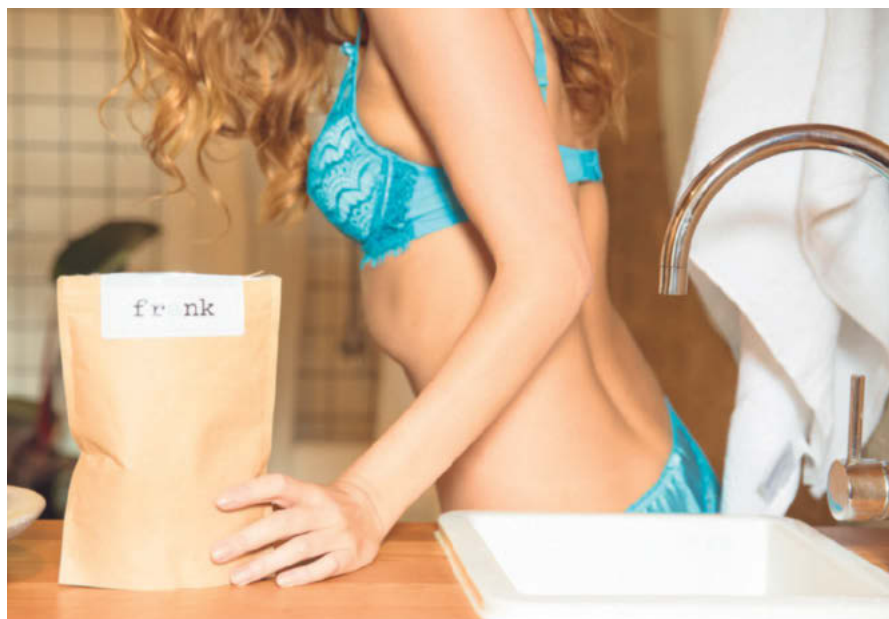


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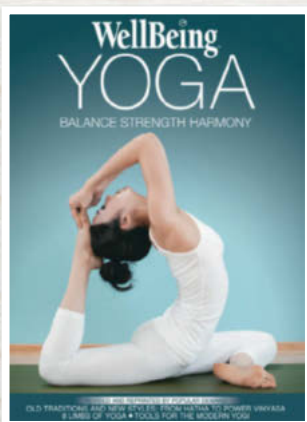
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# YOUR BEAUTIFUL WINTER

**O**ur bodies crave light, fresh foods during summer, while during winter we're more partial to hot meals and stodgy comfort foods. According to traditional Chinese medicine, the body needs warm foods during winter to boost *chi* and support immune health. Soups and stews made with root and sea vegetables also help support the kidneys, which are the organs most under pressure when the temperature drops. As well as everything from detoxifying the blood and regulating your water and electrolyte levels to making hormones and balancing chemicals in the body, the kidneys also provide the body with energy and warmth.

Now is a great time to think about gently cleansing the kidneys to help eliminate toxins and balance the body. Note the word "gentle": the body needs to be fed and nourished during winter and intense detoxing should only be undertaken in warmer months. That said, late autumn is an ideal time to do a mini-detox. When the kidneys aren't supported or are sluggish in their functionality, it can manifest via skin problems, which are exacerbated by harsh winter climates and over-air-conditioned environments.

Herbs that support the kidneys and remove toxins include dandelion leaf and root, marshmallow root, parsley root, cleavers and uva ursi, plus green foods like spirulina (see a naturopath before taking herbs or supplements).

Eating seasonal produce and "warm foods" such as hearty soups and stews, seasonal veg, cooked celery with seaweeds such as arame, hijiki, nori and wakame also supports the body during colder months. Other foods that support good kidney function are watercress, endive, asparagus, chicory root, miso, quinoa, rye, amaranth, cabbage, red, purple and black beans (especially adzuki beans), root veg, mushrooms, buckwheat, beets, kuzu root, chestnuts, sesame, duck, quail, pheasant, miso, tempeh and berries.

Add pungent herbs such as ginger, garlic and turmeric to winter dishes to gently heat the body and stimulate circulation. Garlic also helps to fight bacterial and viral infections and break down mucus caused by winter colds. Swap caffeinated drinks for dandelion tea and use lemongrass, ginger and lemon. Keep up your green smoothies, too, but drink them at midday rather than for breakfast: that is too cooling.

"Wet foods, like stews, soups and broths full of mineral-rich vegetables, are much better for the kidneys than stodgy foods like breads, cakes and pies, which are not easily digested, interfere with digestion and contribute to imbalances," says naturopath Alison Cassar. "Wet foods nourish, cleanse and hydrate the body and the skin ... [Also,] too many animal products can congest the liver and the skin, so eat them in moderation."

A great way to moisturise the skin from the inside out is to boost your intake of omega-3 fatty

acids: eat lots of coldwater fish such as salmon and sardines, and add flaxseeds, chia seeds and walnuts to your breakfast cereal. Green, leafy veg are good as well. Also amp up your intake of pre- and probiotics found in fermented foods to help support good gut flora and boost your immunity. This will not only help fight off germs but will support your gut and therefore your skin, too.

Drink plenty of filtered water to assist the liver and kidneys in flushing out toxins and keeping the body and skin hydrated. A splash of lemon juice in warm water is a great kidney- and liver-cleansing morning pick-me-up, which also gives the body a dose of protective vitamin C.

You can support your kidneys and boost your skin health in other ways, too. The kidneys are connected to the adrenal glands, so reducing stress levels helps to protect the kidneys from imbalance and also keeps skin looking more radiant. Getting a good amount of quality sleep is also vital for healthy hormones and glowing skin.

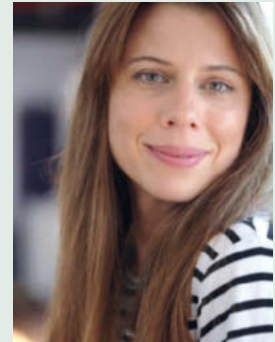
It's important as well to eat foods rich in vitamin C and zinc for immunity. For dry, scaly skin, evening primrose oil can help, but it has to be balanced with omega-3 oils and taken at a dose of 500–600g of GLA to be effective.

Caring for your skin's exterior is also vital. Why not ditch soap and cleanse with unrefined vegetable or nut oils, such as coconut, olive or walnut oil? Excellent for all skin types, oil washes restore the lipid balance (fats and oils) to fight dryness and dehydration. Massage the oil into your skin and rinse with a warm, damp face cloth.

Regular, very gentle exfoliation also helps stimulate a sluggish complexion, remove toxins and promote cellular renewal. Fine oatmeal mixed with yoghurt works well, as the lactic acid in the yoghurt helps remove dead skin cells and toxins, while pink clay and yoghurt makes a skin-refining and detoxifying mask. You can also try making antioxidant-rich fresh-food masks using ingredients such as cooked pumpkin and carrots. For a brightening mask, blend winter fruits such as pears and apples and make the most of their skin-smoothing alpha-hydroxy acids.

To nourish, try massaging your clean face with cold-pressed vegetable oils such as rosehip, macadamia-nut, evening primrose, jojoba, olive, camellia-tea, sweet almond or apricot kernel oil. Try adding a few drops of complexion-boosting essential oils like frankincense, carrot seed, jasmine, patchouli, rosewood, neroli, palmarosa, rose, lavender, sandalwood or chamomile.

And always remember to wear a broad-spectrum sunblock, preferably one that contains zinc oxide as the active ingredient, as UVA and UVB rays can penetrate those grey skies. Be sure to expose your skin to the sun for periods of 10 minutes at safe times (not the middle of the day), though, to get vitamin D levels up — important for healthy skin and a healthy immune system. 🍌



**CARLA OATES**

is a natural beauty expert and the author of *Feeding Your Skin*.



**Include pungent herbs such as ginger, garlic and turmeric in winter dishes to gently heat the body and stimulate circulation.**

Photography iStock



### LEE HOLMES

runs Supercharged Food and has just released her new book, *Eat Clean, Green and Vegetarian*.

Visit her blog at [superchargedfood.com](http://superchargedfood.com) for more cooking inspiration, recipes and tips.



**It's so important to support your local community and its hard-working farmers where you can.**

## EATING WITH THE SEASONS

In Australia, we pride ourselves on our foodie culture. Cooking is at the heart of many families and we're becoming more confident and daring in our cooking skills and abilities. We have also become more conscious of what we eat as the obesity epidemic sweeps the globe and the many health issues exacerbated by diet increase.

One area often overlooked is the importance of eating foods that are in season and locally produced. It's so important to support your local community and its hard-working farmers. For many of them, their livelihood depends on your support of their crops and produce.

In-season foods are flavour-packed and filled with the nutrients your body needs. Once fruits and vegetables are picked or harvested, nutrients begin to disappear and continue to do so until the product is consumed. It's also more economical to eat in season when abundance is high.

When food is out of season but still on your supermarket shelves, it has been grown interstate, overseas or in an artificial environment such as a greenhouse and transported to your plate via road, sea or air. This food can spend weeks or months in transit and, to preserve it, is harvested before it has fully ripened, so it hasn't fully developed to its nutrient or flavour potential. There's also the issue of its carbon footprint.

One of the easiest places to shop for seasonal produce is your local farmers' market. During the week, when you might not be able to find a market, try investigating a local produce co-op that delivers or getting produce boxes delivered — many are springing up across Australia.

Visiting a wholefoods market or greengrocer is good, too; they're more likely to have seasonal produce than the supermarket. Look for organic if your budget allows and speak to the sellers about the provenance of the produce.

### Muchos Nachos

SERVES: 3–4, COOKING & PREP TIME: 25 MINS

<b>2 tomatoes, diced</b>	<b>Nachos Chips</b>
<b>1 cucumber, diced</b>	<b>100g almond meal</b>
<b>Sour cream</b>	<b>1 large organic egg</b>
<b>(visit my website for a dairy-free option)</b>	<b>1 tsp turmeric</b>
<b>Mashed avocado</b>	<b>¼ tsp cumin</b>
<b>Coriander sprigs, to serve</b>	<b>¼ tsp coriander</b>
	<b>1 tsp orange zest</b>
	<b>1 tsp Celtic sea salt</b>

To make the chips, preheat the oven to 180°C.

Place chip ingredients in a large bowl and mix with a wooden spoon to form a dough. Roll out between two baking paper sheets till 2mm thick.

Remove the top piece of baking paper and transfer dough and bottom piece of baking paper to a baking tray. Using a sharp knife, deeply score dough every 3cm, then do the same in the opposite direction so you form squares. Bake for

12 mins. Let cool before breaking chips apart.

To assemble nachos, put chips on a chopping board and top with remaining ingredients.

**Note:** Any leftover chips will keep in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

### Eggplant & Green Bean Curry

SERVES: 4, COOKING & PREP TIME: 30 MINS

<b>4 tbsp extra-virgin coconut oil</b>	<b>Juice 1 lime</b>
<b>6 small eggplants, cut into 6cm wedges</b>	<b>Lime halves, to serve</b>
<b>300mL tomato purée</b>	<b>Curry Paste</b>
<b>270mL additive-free coconut milk</b>	<b>1 large brown onion, chopped</b>
<b>300g green beans</b>	<b>3 garlic cloves, chopped</b>
<b>Celtic sea salt</b>	<b>2 thumb-sized pieces ginger, chopped</b>
<b>Freshly ground black pepper</b>	<b>1 large red chilli, finely chopped</b>
<b>½ cup activated almonds, roughly chopped, to serve</b>	<b>1 tsp ground cumin</b>
<b>Handful coriander leaves, chopped, to serve</b>	<b>1 tsp ground coriander</b>
	<b>1 tsp cardamom</b>
	<b>1 tsp turmeric</b>
	<b>1 tsp curry powder</b>

Put curry paste ingredients in a food processor with 2 tbsp water and whizz for a few seconds.

Heat 2 tbsp of the coconut oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat and fry the eggplants until browned. Remove from the pan and set aside on paper towel to drain.

Heat remaining coconut oil in the pan and cook curry paste for about 3 mins. Add eggplant and stir so it is well covered in paste. Add tomato purée and coconut milk and simmer, partially covered, for 10 mins. Lastly, add green beans and cook for a further 6 mins.

Season well, add almonds, coriander and lime juice and serve with lime halves on the side.

### Chai Chia Breakfast Pudding

SERVES: 4, PREP TIME: OVERNIGHT IN FRIDGE

<b>¼ tsp Celtic sea salt</b>	<b>½ tsp cardamom</b>
<b>¼ cup hazelnuts</b>	<b>½ tsp nutmeg</b>
<b>¾ cup raw cashews</b>	<b>½ tsp ground cinnamon</b>
<b>½ tsp alcohol-free vanilla essence</b>	<b>¼ cup chia seeds</b>
<b>6 drops stevia liquid, or 2 tbsp other sweetener, ie xylitol or rice malt syrup</b>	<b>½ cup chopped nuts, to serve</b>
	<b>Strawberries, to serve</b>
	<b>Almond milk, to serve</b>

Combine salt, hazelnuts, cashews, vanilla, stevia and spices with 750mL filtered water in a blender and whizz until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and add chia seeds. Stir to combine well, then cover and place in the fridge overnight.

To serve, scatter with nuts and strawberries, if you wish, then add almond milk. 🌱





# THE UPSIDE OF THE TOXIC BURDEN

Understanding the gravity of toxicity on our planet incites great sadness and despair. The toxic predicament we are currently facing can be overwhelming.

It can seem like there's no way to stop poisoning the Earth. Established agricultural practices use tonnes of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers that damage soil microbes and pollute water systems. The supermarket-based food system pollutes due to the packaging and transportation inherent in its maintenance. Mainstream medicine's heavy use of pharmaceutical drugs leads to further pollution of our waterways when these medications are metabolised and excreted from the body. The rampant use of plastics is ingrained in our culture and results in plastic rapidly filling up landfill and oceans, negatively affecting the hormonal balance of the planet. The current paradigms in mainstream culture perpetuate our plight.

What could possibly be good about this toxic burden? I asked pioneering futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard that very question.

Barbara Marx Hubbard is a sprightly 85-year-old with a vision for the planet wherein an evolution of consciousness enables creativity and renewal. She spoke at last year's UPLIFT festival, a gathering at which spirituality, scientific evidence and evolutionary ideas merge to stimulate, open and support movements and understandings that awaken people to be both conscious and creative.

In 1945, when nuclear weapons were dropped on Japan, the horror and gravity of the situation was not lost to Marx Hubbard. The huge pain and suffering of the people who were affected triggered in her a new perspective on the world. She began to ask the question, "What is good about this new power we have uncovered?"

Since then, Marx Hubbard has continued to ask that question. Her work supports and holds a vision of our planet being vital and abundant, populated by conscious beings who co-create the reality they live. In terms of what is good about our toxic plight, Marx Hubbard has a number of ideas.

First, this is a big step for our collective consciousness and our collective action. We have never faced such a situation before, ever. It's the first time we have collectively come to recognise that our existence is threatened. Perhaps this awakening is the bomb that will break the paradigms of toxicity that trap our current civilisation. Perhaps it is the flash of light in our collective consciousness that will unleash a zeal for life

and vitality, one that is currently lacking in our mainstream cultures.

Marx Hubbard explains that humanity in the 1950s only took responsibility for basic survival and reproduction. "We thought we had it all figured out," she said. Before the publication of *A Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in the early 1960s, there was virtually no understanding about the devastating impact of pesticides and herbicides on the ecosystem. "We didn't know what we were doing ... We were like a baby in gestation, really quite unaware of the situation we were involved in."

Now we have been birthed as "a new humanity"; we are becoming aware of our own evolution and co-creative power, Marx Hubbard says. In part, this is thanks to the communication capacity of the internet, which provides us the choice of where we source our information. We have the capacity to communicate our own thinking and connect to others' thinking, too. Humanity is waking up to how we co-create life on this planet. We know the current toxic burden is a result of human actions. We know it requires us to step up. We know our actions can create a future that is either restorative or destructive.

Marx Hubbard suggests that this toxicity is a self-selecting, survival mechanism, simply another part of Earth's 4.5 billion-year evolution. Becoming aware of this gives humanity the opportunity to decide to survive. Each of us can consciously choose ways of living that are healthy and life-affirming and get rid of what's not working. Paradigms can be changed once we recognise them and start to act and think in a different way.

Underlying Marx Hubbard's work is evolutionary understanding, from the Big Bang until now. One of the universe's evolutionary forces is to optimise what is effective. It gets rid of things that aren't working. This remarkable woman suggests the "universe uses optimistic evolutionary forces".

The vision of the planet as vibrant, creative and healthy is a wonderful vision to have. Marx Hubbard is often referred to as an "optimistic visionary" — which is far better than a pessimistic one! For the next 10–15 years, Marx Hubbard predicts, the future of the planet is in our hands.

By aligning your thinking with the transmutative capacity of the planet, you — and humanity — can co-create a thriving planet rather than a toxic one. Each of us has the capacity to make choices that lead to regeneration. Solutions exist. We just need to start acting on them. 🌱



**SALLY MATHRICK**

is a practising naturopath. She runs *Sparkle Detox* and Wellness Courses and Retreats. See [sparklewell.com.au](http://sparklewell.com.au) for more information.



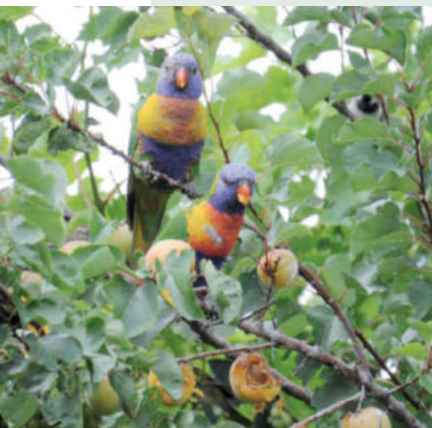
**Each of us can consciously choose ways of living that are healthy and life-affirming and get rid of what's not working.**

Photography iStock



**JACKIE FRENCH**

is the author of *The Chook Book* (Aird Books). Her oldest chook, Gertie, is now 17. Although Gertie's sisters have all long since fallen off the perch, Gertie still lays extremely large brown eggs most days of the year.



**Birds can clean up between 40 and 90 per cent of pests. They are also beautiful and the most obvious wildlife most suburbs have. Who wants to live in a human-only desert?**

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## LIVING & LOVING THE WILDLIFE

I'm writing this with a mob of white cockatoos sitting on the pomegranate tree outside my study window. They're just passing through because there's a white goshawk sitting on the angophora tree near them. If they don't leave soon, one or two will become white goshawk dinner.

Once, mobs of white cockatoos were followed by predator birds. That's why they post lookouts — sentinels who keep a keen eye out for predators. But along came colonists with guns; they shot the goshawks and other predator birds or used pesticides that thinned the predator birds' eggs so there were few viable hatchlings.

We're lucky: we turned our home into a reserve so we get white, red and grey goshawks, little eagles, wedgetails, powerful owls and many other species that keep populations of other birds and critters, native and exotic, under control.

But even if you live in the inner city, birds can clean up between 40 and 90 per cent of pests. They are also beautiful and the most obvious wildlife most suburbs have. Who wants to live in a human-only desert?

If birds eat your fruit, however, try growing trees closer together — many birds don't like flying into thickets. Here, the birds eat the top 10 per cent. We call it "paying the tithe" as the birds were here before we were. It's rent. But we get the lower fruit that birds don't want to scramble for.

We also grow decoy crops. Birds like sour, small fruit, so we grow cumquats, calamondins, lilly pillies, emu berries, native figs, "wild" small kiwifruit and others. The birds are conservative; they finish one food supply before they begin on another. And that means as long as they have small fruit to eat all year round they leave our big juicy oranges or apples or pears alone. Try damson plums, too, or sloes or loquats, though beware of fruit fly with them in hot areas. Make sure either you or the birds clean them up before fruit fly can get to them.

But birds need to eat, too. Think about what else they have to eat, apart from your fruit trees. Try planting half for you and half of the things birds prefer. That way you get the fruit and the joy of seeing happy birds munching away. You get a glow of pleasure from proffering hospitality.

We have large mobs of rosellas, parrots and bower birds here, but the birds ignore our oranges — they're eating the tiny, sour calamondins. Calamondins are very prolific and small enough to be carried away or held in a claw.

There are many other crops to tempt birds, of course. Look at whatever native (sour) fruits

grow well in your area then use them to tempt the birds away from the nasty sweet stuff we humans like.

Birds often eat fruit just for moisture, especially in dry times. Give fresh water every day — 40 per cent of fruit eating is a search for water. Even though there's always water in the pools in our creek, the birds still like water close at hand and will eat fruit rather than fly 200 metres for it. Put birdbaths in a shady spot out of the cat's reach and keep them topped up with cool, clean water. You may find the bird depredations cease entirely or are much reduced. And you'll have the delight of watching the drinking birds, too.

Encourage resident birds as well, such as our goshawks, eagles and powerful owls; they will help keep away seasonal invaders such as white cockatoos. This applies especially to resident currawongs, magpies and other large birds.

And pick often. Once birds get the taste of a fruit it will be very difficult indeed to convince them otherwise. A daily harvesting of ripe apricots, strawberries, cherries, raspberries etc can mean the birds won't notice the tempting morsels in your backyard.

Picking often also means that pests like fruit fly won't be attracted by the scent of ripe fruit; nor will scale or stink bugs and others that love ripe fruit fragrances. Smaller daily harvests are also easier to handle. I throw whole fruit in the freezer to stew or turn into jam or jelly later when I have the time. Daily handfuls of berries soon add up as you put each one in bags or containers in the freezer.

One thing to avoid is bird netting. I have seen too many birds tangled in it, their legs broken, their beaks tied up, or fruit bats or snakes caught and dangling there till they die. You can use fruit-fly netting instead: lovely fine-textured stuff that no one can get caught in. It will also, of course, protect your fruit from being stung by fruit fly and getting small grubs in it. It'll give some hail protection, though not if the hail is golf-ball sized, and a few degrees of frost protection as well. Put it on about a fortnight before the fruit is ripe, then roll it up after picking to use again next year.

But do leave a little for the birds, if not on the trees — you don't want them knowing exactly where the bounty is — then some fruit on the bird-feeding table or strung up on string in another non-fruiting tree as a thankyou for eating pests, for giving joy and beauty, but mostly so that we don't have to live on a planet that's a human desert, inhabited only by us and our pets. Wild birds are ... wild. And every life needs some wildlife within it. 🍌





# YOUR PETS & SUPERBUGS

**T**he emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria — so-called superbugs — is a global issue with short- and long-term implications for human and animal health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified antibiotic resistance as one of the greatest threats to human health in all communities. In time, even simple infections, usually easily treated, may not respond to antibiotics.

Animal health providers, farming industries and even pet owners have an important role to play in reducing the overuse of antibiotics. The Australian Veterinary Association provides guidelines to reduce their use. These include avoiding use for infections not shown to be caused by bacteria; for example, some urinary tract problems, pancreatic disease, many gut problems and viral respiratory diseases.

Antibiotics should be used only after test results identify bacterial infection and, ideally, narrow-spectrum antibiotics are chosen on the basis of sensitivity testing. Treatment should be carried out only for the time required to eliminate infection. Unfortunately, in practice, the time and money required for such tests isn't always easy to find in an environment where there's emotional pressure to heal animals quickly and cheaply.

A holistic approach to animal health and wellness provides alternatives to antibiotic use. So what are some steps we can take, as animal owners and carers, to reduce antibiotic use?

**1** Avoid use of antibiotics where not required. Bacterial infection does not play a part in some common illnesses in veterinary medicine but antibiotics may be prescribed anyway.

**2** Use alternatives where safe and effective. It's always best to consult your vet, or holistic vet, before using them. Natural treatments may cause side-effects in some individual dogs or cats. Never use essential oils in or on cats. (See below for some treatment options.)

**3** If antibiotics are prescribed for your pet, make sure you complete the entire course. If you have trouble giving the medications or you think they may cause side-effects, your vet or support staff can give you suggestions. Resistant infections can be passed on from pet to owner so always wash your hands, especially before eating.

**4** Practise good hygiene: wash your hands. No need to use antibacterial washes; soap and warm water are fine. Make sure you wash all surfaces of your hands, including the web between your fingers. As an alternative to antibacterial cleaners around the house, use hot water, vinegar and bicarb of soda. This will reduce the emergence of resistant bacteria and also reduce toxins your pet is exposed to.

**5** Use probiotics after courses of antibiotics to replenish good bacteria and support gut health and immunity.

**6** Preventative healthcare for your pet will reduce infections and the need for antibiotics. This includes judicious use (but not overuse) of vaccines, flea, mite and worm control treatments and regular health checks (annually for younger pets; biannually for older pets) for early detection of health problems. Dental disease is one of the most common health issues in pets, resulting in gingivitis, periodontal disease and the need for antibiotics and dental surgical procedures. Make sure your pet has a dental check every six months.

**7** Treat underlying health issues. Antibiotics are commonly used to treat skin infections secondary to allergies. By spending the time, and some money, to treat food, flea, contact and atopic allergies, you will reduce the incidence of yeast and bacterial infections requiring treatment.

**8** Use immune support, especially in patients at risk. Dogs and cats with immune diseases, older patients or patients undergoing chemotherapy or on other immune-suppressing medications may benefit from herbal immune and adaptogen support, eg echinacea, astragalus, Panax ginseng, medicinal mushrooms.

**9** Use specific organ support when pets are sick, eg probiotics to treat gut infections, milk thistle to treat liver infections. These will help improve response to treatment and shorten antibiotic treatment times. Silymarin, an extract of milk thistle, has the added benefit of helping reduce the development of bacterial resistance.

**10** Buy organic produce. Increasing demand for organic free-range meat reduces the use of growth-promoting antibiotics. It also improves animal welfare.

Here are some alternatives to antibiotics you can use in pets (consult your vet first):

■ Bacterial skin infections: calendula cream or tea rinse; in dogs, 10 per cent tea tree cream

■ Yeast skin infections: apple cider vinegar diluted with water 1:3

■ Infected wounds: calendula tea rinse (with added myrrh, frankincense and turmeric when wounds are slow to heal); medical honey

■ Conjunctivitis: black tea rinse

■ Cystitis: cranberry extract to help prevent *E. coli* infection (avoid if your pet has oxalate bladder stones)

■ Diarrhoea: probiotics; herbs containing berberine such as Oregon grape root, a natural antibiotic for the gut

■ Viral respiratory disease: echinacea; marshmallow

■ Gingivitis: aloe vera gel

Pet owners and veterinarians need to work together and consider not just the short-term aim of treating infection or illness but the long-term health implications for our pets, ourselves and medicine into the future. 🐾



**KAREN  
GOLDRICK**

is a holistic veterinarian  
at All Natural Vet  
Care, Russell Lea,  
Sydney, Australia.  
T: +61 2 9712 5844  
W: [naturalvet.com.au](http://naturalvet.com.au)



**As an alternative to antibacterial cleaners around the house, use hot water, vinegar and bicarb of soda. This will reduce the emergence of resistant bacteria and also reduce toxins your pet is exposed to.**

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# COLUMN

## STARGAZING MAY & JUNE 2015

BY CHRISTINE BROADBENT



### CHRISTINE BROADBENT

loves her work as a travelling astrologer and returns to Sydney in mid-June. She offers personal consultations, also by phone and Skype. To find out about Christine's June Solstice Seminar, "Dancing with the Fortunes: Planets Venus and Jupiter", or to receive her quarterly newsletter, email [christine@astrologyspot.com.au](mailto:christine@astrologyspot.com.au), visit [astrologyspot.com.au](http://astrologyspot.com.au) or call +61 402 664 101.



### CANCER

As a Cancer, your sensitivity and homing instincts are strong, but now the spiritual flexibility of Pisces supports you best. From May 17 New Moon, Lover Venus hooks with Neptune to drive self-care and home pleasures as a spiritual recharge. This will see you through the stresses of May 22–26 and deliver healing insights May 28. Deal with money matters Jun 6–29, but wait until after Jun 22 for big financial commitments.



### LEO

Everything speeds up from May 4's Full Moon. Yet don't ignore a tension between home life and work concerns. Breathe deeply, clarify the most practical task in these areas, then May 6–12 helps it happen. A mega Jupiter in Leo starts to help Jun 6 — the day Venus enters Leo, driving a sociable month. The next 16 days are golden, ending in a potent Jupiter–Uranus link Jun



### TAURUS

April 22 to May 17 has sweet times, with a passionate Full Moon that profiles relationships May 4; a liberating New Moon in Taurus May 17; and some very helpful Earth–Water links. May 8 to Jun 6, loving communication is key. Remember that sensitivity to other people's needs is critical to any success, particularly May 22–26, potentially an emotionally fraught period. If so, wait for May 28 or Jun 6–11. Big spends and contracts are best delayed until after Jun 16.



### VIRGO

Earthy Taurus time suits you and has you looking for ways to combine travel and renewing old friendships. The planetary load indicates career concerns, however, with May 6–12 good for brainstorming. When Mercury goes retro in your vocational sector May 19 to Jun 12, carefully analyse your path. What could you do to work smarter? This is a time to rest, gathering enthusiasm for the big tasks to come. Jun 22–29 moves things along nicely.



### LIBRA

Venus enters your vocational sector May 8 and changes start to work for you. Sensitivity to emotional undercurrents protects against hasty action and you will need patience to make the most of this time. A new solar cycle accents adventure May 21 to Jun 22: big plans tempt. But keep plans easy to manage so you can co-operate with a retro communication cycle that has great potential for information gathering. By Jun 16's New Moon, give your enthusiasm its head; developments near Jun 22 could cement a strong bond within an inspiring relationship.



### SCORPIO

Scorpio Full Moon May 4 highlights things you want to change and Saturn in Scorpio from Jun 15 for three months is a chance to do so. Integrate a once-in-29-years learning experience and consider the past two years' lessons. Saturn evokes hard-won wisdom; late



### GEMINI

In the Sun of May 21 to Jun 22, a creative burst accelerates your speedy mind. Yet your guiding planet, Mercury, is retro in Gemini May 19 to Jun 12, so don't rush anything or substantial errors of judgement could occur. Instead, research your conscious goals via reflective meditation and experience a mental spring-cleaning. A dynamic planetary combo with Jun 3's Full Moon boosts intuition and reason. Jun 6–12 helps a plan work, with take-off at the Gemini New Moon, Jun 16–22.



### SAGITTARIUS

Serious Saturn has big plans for you in June, but May 3, 15 & 23 present challenges via a personal or business relationship. For real progress, process those hurdles without defending or attacking. Saturn in Sagittarius Jun 6–12 accents finding a better balance with the vital people in your life. One of the keys is to assume only responsibilities that feel authentic and just. Saturn leaves your sign for three months on Jun 15, lessening the pressure; Jun 22 to Jul 1 gets very exciting indeed.



### CAPRICORN

May 8–17 is a chance to listen more closely to your heart. With your ruler Saturn in playful Sagittarius, life isn't obeying old rules. This could depress you — or you could choose to rethink old attitudes. When Saturn returns to a more orderly sign mid-June, don't think you can reinstate old forms of control; going back isn't possible. Now, progress involves honesty about what empowers you and what does not. Reinvent your home life: Jun 6–22 shows you how.



### AQUARIUS

Your opinions shape-shift in May with family values uppermost. Quality of life is the issue, not worldly success or



### PISCES

May 8 heralds a loving Venus cycle that could deepen existing relationships and bring a new love interest your way. Yet be cautious: sweetly, softly is the Pisces way, but not near May 15, 23 and mid-June, when haste and disagreements may feature at home or work. May 26, 31 and Jun 3 also warn against faulty judgements that could lead you to place faith in the wrong things. Yet the cycle beginning Jun 22 accents your love energy and paves the way for an open-hearted time, with money flowing easily.



### ARIES

Verbal restraint is best on May 15 & 22–26, when unpredictable emotions rule. Enthusiasm will drive your success May 31 to Jun 11 — this includes Jun 3's exciting Full Moon, which speaks of inspiring travel and learning. In June, Sun, Mercury, Venus and Mars boost your communication and negotiation skills, to achieve the changes you are after. Ensure these changes are driven by integrity as well as enthusiasm or mid-July will bring you unstuck. Jun 22 holds a pleasant surprise, probably resolving a long wait.





# RESVERATROL: A MAGIC ANTI-AGEING BULLET?

Imagine if a simple gesture like swallowing a pill could reverse ageing, prevent cancer and replace exercise. Throw in the ability to mimic the effects of eating less food without depriving yourself of even a morsel of Heston's latest sugar-laden, fat-impregnated culinary delight and the weight-loss industry would be frantically seeking their next recidivist celebrity.

Enter resveratrol, touted as the miracle molecule that can do the above and plenty more.

## THE GOOD NEWS

Every scientific article that features resveratrol — and there are close to 7000 — commences by listing the myriad benefits of this nutrient, derived from the skin of red grapes, including its capacity to neutralise free radicals, boost antioxidant defences, diminish inflammation and eliminate cancer cells. As a result of this unique combination of talents and research performed on animals and cells in test tubes, experts suggest that resveratrol has the potential to not only prevent Alzheimer's dementia, heart disease and cancer but to also treat these diseases once they have taken hold. Yeasts, worms and mice fed a diet high in fats live longer when treated with resveratrol, suggesting it might provide a similar anti-ageing advantage for us.

The "French Paradox" is an oft-quoted cliché that attempts to explain how the adverse effects of smoking and a diet rich in fats can be mitigated by drinking red wine, a rich source of resveratrol. The French would also be delighted to know that older adults who drink red wine (up to three glasses a day) regularly have a reduced (up to 50 per cent) risk of developing Alzheimer's disease as well as macular degeneration, the main cause of blindness in the ageing population.

## THE PROBLEMS

The problem with regular alcohol consumption is it's also associated with breast cancer, aggressive prostate cancer and osteoporosis. Aside from the skin of red grapes, resveratrol is also found in berries and nuts. Unfortunately, the research carried out on cell cultures and laboratory animals indicates we humans need much more resveratrol than we can source from the diet if we are going to reap all the purported benefits of this wonder nutrient. Resveratrol might be able to help rats live longer and healthier, but what does the research say it does for us higher forms of life? This is where the waters get a little choppy.

Inside every cell of your body reside tiny energisers called mitochondria, or cellular batteries. As you age, mitochondria become increasingly worn and dysfunctional, making it more difficult to provide the vital energy your cells need to operate. Anti-ageing experts speculate

that this might be one of the major reasons we age. Rejuvenate mitochondria and we would be able to continue functioning almost indefinitely.

Provisional research on rats has revealed that resveratrol can ignite the very chemicals that reinvigorate mitochondria, effectively restoring their youthful mojo. All that remains is to assess whether this formula works for us.

The ideal place to start would be to examine the effects of resveratrol on an ageing population whose mitochondria have already begun to fail. Exercise, including aerobic training and weight lifting, is known to make our cells more efficient and increasingly powerful. The challenge lies in regularly committing to an activity that is hardly enjoyable, demands effort and has rewards that aren't immediately realised. Popping a pill that gives the same result might be more palatable.

Researchers decided to have a bet both ways. They took a group of sedentary ageing males, put them through eight weeks of high-intensity training and gave half of them 250mg of resveratrol, while the others took a placebo. You'd expect that adding resveratrol would at least add to the exercise benefits. The results were just the opposite. Resveratrol supplementation reduced the positive effect of exercise training on blood pressure, cholesterol and maximal oxygen uptake, an indicator of how efficiently cells are functioning. Instead of increasing a chemical generated by exercise that opened up blood vessels, resveratrol lessened its production.

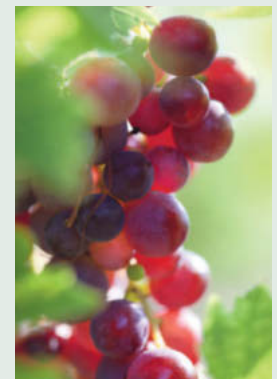
Needless to say, this unleashed a torrential riposte from those who'd already conferred sainthood on the wonder potion that is resveratrol. They claimed the dose of resveratrol was too miserly, much less than that which made rodents morph into super-athletes. So researchers repeated the experiment, this time on males in their early 20s, and they went one step further, doing a muscle biopsy to establish what effect resveratrol had on the molecules that can make mitochondria younger. The result was once again unreassuring. While exercise turned these substances on, taking resveratrol blunted the effect. Resveratrol also abrogated the gains in muscle strength generated by weight training.

If resveratrol does such wonders for lower forms of life, why does research suggest it might not be working for us? This may have a lot to do with the fact that only recently have we started to explore how resveratrol affects humans. When it comes to preventing heart disease, treating obesity, warding off Alzheimer's, nuking cancer cells or extending human lifespans, the science of resveratrol has only just got off the starting blocks. What really worries me is whether the 750mg I'm taking daily will prevent me from moving like Jagger or looking like Arnie. 🍷



**DR MICHAEL ELSTEIN**

is an anti-ageing physician and writer based in Sydney, Australia. He is the author of three books including his latest, *The Wellness Guide to Preventing the Diseases of Ageing*. He has also designed the app *The Diet Guide to Ageing Prevention*.



**Humans need much more resveratrol than we can source from the diet if we are going to reap all the purported benefits of this wonder nutrient.**

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## HUNGRY ADRENALS

Tania was a tall, well-built, happy lady in her 60s. She listed a number of longstanding complaints and told me she had decided to try an alternative approach to prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Recurring hayfever, sneezing and allergic rhinitis had plagued her for decades. A two-tone severe ringing in the ears was becoming unbearable. X-rays had revealed spurs on her heels and several vertebrae. Her eyes always felt scratchy, sore and dry. She often experienced difficulty in breathing as well as heart palpitations. Her legs felt leaden and heavy and tended to accumulate excess fluid around the ankles. Tania's left hips, knee and leg muscles, in particular, gave her a great deal of discomfort and pain. At times her fingers lost all sensation.

On close examination, Tania's eyelashes looked crusty and the skin around her eyes was dry and cracked. She had been depending on the antihistamine fexofenadine to ease her symptoms, but was hoping to find a cure rather than the temporary respite of medication.

Tania's legs were covered in multiple bruises that she was unable to account for. I also noticed that Tania, several times during the course of our conversation, blotted excess moisture from the corners of her mouth. Although her eyes were too dry, she had an overabundance of saliva.

Tania's left ankle was slightly swollen and her fingernails were badly ridged. She had a history of rheumatic fever as a young child and infectious hepatitis in her early teens.

Tests revealed a profile of:

- Perilously nutrient-depleted adrenal glands
- Thyroid incompetence
- Poor liver detoxification (notably methylation)
- Bacterial endotoxins
- Sensitivity to pesticides, agricultural chemicals
- Intolerance to many food additives, especially preservatives, thickening agents, artificial sweeteners, humectants and food colourings
- Sensitivity to chlorinated products (bleaching agents, disinfectants, mould and mildew removers); ammonia (disinfectants, glass cleaners, floor washes, all-purpose cleaning products); sodium bisulphate (toilet cleaners); glycol ethers (perfumes, soaps, cosmetics, foods); petroleum solvents (floor cleaners)
- Severe fungal sensitivity
- Hypoglycaemia

We were discussing the results when Tania collapsed with her head on my desk, laughing and crying.

"Low blood sugar," she squealed. "Why didn't I realise? That must be why I always have this HUGE craving for chocolate followed by a hunger for something extremely salty. No matter how hard I fight it, I can't stop bingeing." She clapped her hands, eyes wide, "Does this mean there's

a concrete reason for my pig-out sessions and I might be able to regain some control?"

We laughed as I assured Tania there was every likelihood her chocolate demon could be tamed.

The first priority was to ensure that Tania's adrenal glands were well replenished with energy sources. High on the list were avocados, green leafy vegetable smoothies, Tasmanian shiitake mushrooms, broccoli and royal jelly. Muscle testing ruled out sensitivity to the latter.

Royal jelly's nutritional profile is amazing: very high in protein and hydroxy acids, which boost the immune system; rich in phospholipids; extremely high in nucleic acids and acetylcholine; and the only nutritional source — that I am aware of — that provides a good source of globulin. It has abundant B vitamins and, in particular, pantothenic acid needed to make cortisone and all the adrenal steroid hormones. Royal jelly even supplies zinc, vitamin A and precious D<sub>3</sub>.

A note of caution for readers who, after marvelling at the health potential of royal jelly, feel fired up to try a course: if you have a "sensitive" or "allergic" tendency, *never* take royal jelly without the advice of a qualified practitioner. While royal jelly's nutrient spectrum, anti-inflammatory and immune-modulating benefits have been well documented, you may be the unlucky individual who suffers a possibly severe reaction. This is one supplement to never take on a whim. Royal jelly has potent anti-allergic properties but the product is not for everyone.

Tania wished to keep her supplements down to an essential minimum. The choice was easy:

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Years later, I received this email from Tania: "Seven years ago, I commenced a health plan with you and had fantastic results. Unfortunately, financial and family problems meant I had to discontinue it. Happily, both problems are now resolved and I desperately need to resume the plan. I have started a raw food diet in preparation for a great change of lifestyle and I am in the right place mentally and raring to go. Please let me know how we can resume my plan." 🍌





# A JOURNEY OF HEALING

Three years after the diagnosis of Sjögren's syndrome, one reader now views her illness as a gift.



I have lived with the diagnosis of Sjögren's syndrome for just over three years. What started as waking with a burning, dry mouth soon progressed to dry eyes, severe fatigue, joint pain and confirmation that the chronic reflux and other stomach upsets I had been experiencing for over 12 months were part of an autoimmune disorder known as Sjögren's syndrome.

With this disorder, the body's immune system attacks its own moisture-producing glands, resulting in decreased production of tears and saliva. Dry eyes and mouth are typical symptoms but it is a systemic disease and may cause dry airways, vaginal dryness, lung disease, skin complaints, gastrointestinal disorders, inflamed nerves and muscles, arthritis and fatigue, and affect memory and concentration. The cause is unknown but may be a mix of genetic and environmental factors, and stress exacerbates the symptoms.

My lifestyle up until this point could have been described as driven, which is not uncommon for women today. I pushed myself mentally and physically leading up to the diagnosis at 51 years of age, juggling study, work, family, house renovations and intense exercise most days. Feeling stressed was not unusual. A few health crises and emotional upheavals along the way caused occasional depression and anxiety to pop up. In hindsight, I believe either stress or a virus may have triggered my Sjögren's.

With my Sjögren's diagnosis, anxiety raised its head. In the weeks after

diagnosis, I felt trapped in a cage of scary, painful physical sensations and was told that, while it wouldn't kill me, my quality of life could be affected. My fear of what the future held and frustration at losing my previously active lifestyle made me grieve for my old self.

I gave up work to focus on my health. In the first weeks, I took myself to a health spa to escape my symptoms but, what do you know, the symptoms managed to find me! I wasn't sleeping, my blood tests showed inflammation and I felt alone in this battle. I looked normal but my family didn't understand the severity of my discomfort. They were used to a wife and mother adept at multitasking.

My path to recovery began when I was referred to an excellent immunologist. He prescribed the drug Plaquenil, fish oil and vitamin D, readily offered information on my disorder and was open to alternative therapies. It has been, and still is, a journey of healing both mind and body.

My next step was seeing a psychologist, who helped me process my emotional issues. With her help, I learnt to accept the diagnosis and my new self. I began to accept bad feelings and physical sensations, to listen to my body, to take rest and not feel guilty about it, to focus on today and stop comparing myself to others. Through her teaching, I gave myself permission to feel. In allowing myself to identify and experience those feelings, I was not as scared by them and became less anxious. I became grateful when the physical symptoms backed off

even a little bit, which led to a sense of wellbeing. I allowed myself to just be.

After three months, the psychologist suggested I might benefit from acupuncture by a local person who practised Five Elements acupuncture. These sessions were a blend of a short psychotherapy session and needling. He carried on the valuable teachings of acceptance. I developed a more spiritual outlook on life and started to be kinder to myself as I realised that my past internal dialogue was critical. I had felt alone in my health battles, which caused me anxiety, but both these health practitioners helped me realise I had the power to comfort myself.

At five months from diagnosis, after a few acupuncture treatments, I started to feel a subtle improvement in my physical wellbeing. I shifted my exercise focus to yoga and Pilates. I tried to rebuild my fitness with walking but found my fatigue levels were variable, so I walked when I could and rested when my body told me to. Around nine months from diagnosis, the signs of inflammation disappeared from my blood. While fatigue was still an issue, the annoying symptoms of dry mouth and physical aches and pains started to recede.

Just over three years from diagnosis, my blood is still inflammation free and the physical symptoms are much quieter. I don't feel my old self but I am content with this new self. My immunologist has said in six months he would consider me in remission and will decrease the dose of Plaquenil. I now exercise regularly and more vigorously and find I have fewer aches and pains if my body is strong and flexible. I still feel fatigued a bit sooner than I did pre-diagnosis but my stamina and fitness have improved. I am mindful of my diet and try to eat a healthier, anti-inflammatory diet. I have monthly acupuncture sessions as I experience a positive effect from them and it's a valuable spiritual check-in.

The journey has made me appreciative of the basics of life and satisfied with the now. I view Sjögren's as a gift that has made me change the way I live my life, as I'll go into older age less anxious, more mindful and grateful for my lot, and hopefully healthier. I would say to anyone diagnosed with Sjögren's syndrome, feel hopeful, as you may be able to turn your situation around through positive manoeuvres. And don't be afraid to ask for help. 🍀

■ For more information on Sjögren's Syndrome and other autoimmune disorders, see [autoimmune.org.au](http://autoimmune.org.au).

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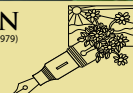


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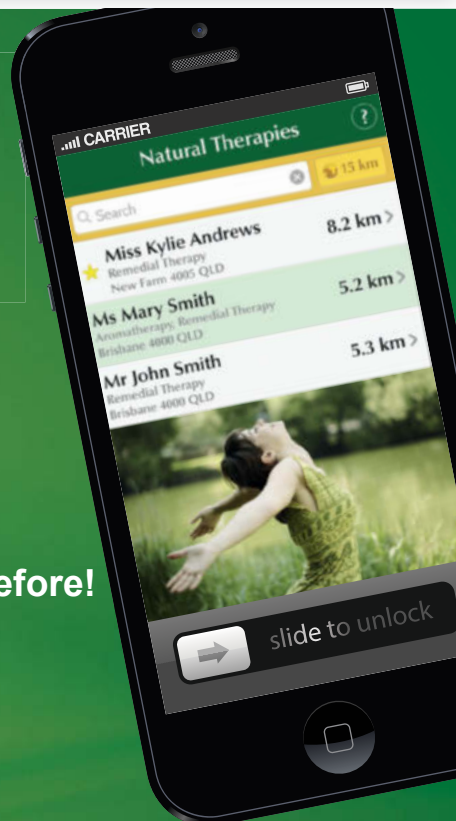
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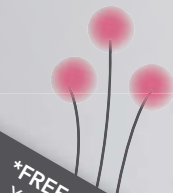
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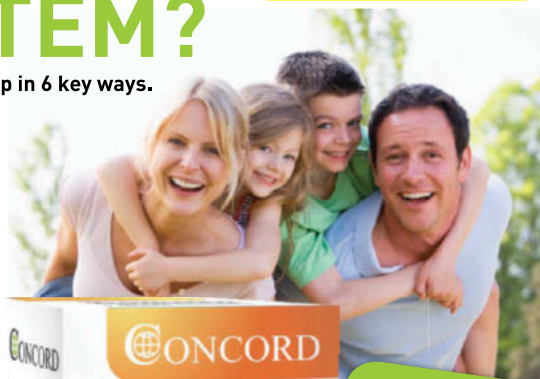
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# WHAT'S ON



## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Terry has been recording more episodes of *The Happiness Show* for ABC Radio. Among his guests this year have been (from left) Geoff Jansz, Lee Holmes and Adam Guthrie, who will also feature as chefs in *Eat Well*, our new magazine coming out later this year.



Illustration Tams at Soul Stories: soul-stories.com

## WHAT'S COMING UP FOR YOU

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>April 22</b><br/>Earth Day<br/><a href="http://earthday.org">earthday.org</a></p> <p><b>May, Global</b><br/>Mindful in May (sign up by May 1 to participate)<br/><a href="http://mindfulinmay.org">mindfulinmay.org</a></p> <p><b>May 2-3, Melbourne, AU</b><br/>International Science of Nutrition in Medicine &amp; Healthcare Conference<br/><a href="http://nutritionmedicine.org.au">nutritionmedicine.org.au</a></p> <p><b>May 4-10, AU</b><br/>Composting Awareness Week<br/><a href="http://compostweek.com.au/core">compostweek.com.au/core</a></p> <p><b>May 8-10, Bali</b><br/>ICMART World Congress on Medical Acupuncture<br/><a href="http://icmart2015.com">icmart2015.com</a></p> <p><b>May 10, AU</b><br/>Mother's Day Classic<br/><a href="http://mothersdayclassic.com.au">mothersdayclassic.com.au</a></p> <p><b>May 13-16, Perth, AU</b><br/>Dietitians Association of Australia National Conference<br/><a href="http://arinex.com.au/dietitians2015">arinex.com.au/dietitians2015</a></p> <p><b>May 15, Global</b><br/>International Day of Families</p> <p><b>May 15-17, Sydney, AU</b></p> | <p>Mindd International Forum 2015<br/><a href="http://mindd.org">mindd.org</a></p> <p><b>May 16-18, Auckland, NZ</b><br/>New Zealand Association of Medical Herbalists Conference<br/><a href="http://nzamh.org.nz">nzamh.org.nz</a></p> <p><b>May 17-23, AU</b><br/>Food Allergy Week<br/><a href="http://foodallergyaware.com.au">foodallergyaware.com.au</a></p> <p><b>May 18-19, Gold Coast, AU</b><br/>Eating Disorders &amp; Obesity Conference<br/><a href="http://eatingdisordersaustralia.org.au">eatingdisordersaustralia.org.au</a></p> <p><b>May 22-24, Adelaide, AU</b><br/>Australian Acupuncture &amp; Chinese Medicine Annual Conference<br/><a href="http://acupuncture.org.au">acupuncture.org.au</a></p> <p><b>May 25, Brisbane, AU</b><br/>Herb Awareness Show<br/><a href="http://qldherbsociety.org.au">qldherbsociety.org.au</a></p> <p><b>May 26, AU</b><br/>National Sorry Day<br/><a href="http://nsdc.org.au">nsdc.org.au</a></p> <p><b>May 28-31, Sydney, AU</b><br/>MindBodySpirit Festival<br/><a href="http://mbsfestival.com.au">mbsfestival.com.au</a></p> <p><b>May 31, Global</b><br/>World No-Tobacco Day</p> <p><b>June 5, Global</b></p> | <p>World Environment Day<br/><a href="http://unep.org/wed">unep.org/wed</a></p> <p><b>June 5-7, Rome, Italy</b><br/>HRI International Homeopathy Research Conference<br/><a href="http://hrirome2015.org">hrirome2015.org</a></p> <p><b>June 5-8, Melbourne, AU</b><br/>MindBodySpirit Festival<br/><a href="http://mbsfestival.com.au">mbsfestival.com.au</a></p> <p><b>June 6-8, Melbourne, AU</b><br/>International Congress on Natural Medicine<br/><a href="http://metagenics.com.au">metagenics.com.au</a></p> <p><b>June 6-9, Bellingen, AU</b><br/>Bellingen Readers &amp; Writers Festival<br/><a href="http://bellingenwritersfestival.com.au">bellingenwritersfestival.com.au</a></p> <p><b>June 8, Global</b><br/>World Oceans Day<br/><a href="http://worldoceansday.org">worldoceansday.org</a></p> <p><b>June 10-11, Sydney, AU</b><br/>Happiness &amp; Its Causes<br/><a href="http://happinessanditscauses.com.au">happinessanditscauses.com.au</a></p> <p><b>June 10-11, Sydney, AU</b><br/>The Wellness Show<br/><a href="http://wellnessshow.com.au">wellnessshow.com.au</a></p> <p><b>June 26-28, Adelaide, AU</b><br/>APS College of Clinical Psychologists Conference<br/><a href="http://groups.psychology.org.au/cclin/conference2015">groups.psychology.org.au/cclin/conference2015</a></p> |
|---|--|---|

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